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# SEDUCTION

# History of PROSTITUTION

*Among All the Peoples of the World, From  
the Most Remote Antiquity to  
the Present Day*

by

PAUL LACROIX

(Pierre Dufour)

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French and Foreign

*Translated from the original French by*

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# History of Prostitution

PART TWO

Antiquity  
Rome and Christian Era

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## CHAPTER XXVIII

IT WAS under the emperors, it was under the preverse influence of their depraved manners, it was by their example and at their unhealthy instigation that Roman society made frightful progress in that corruption which ended by disorganizing it and by preparing the way for the triumph of Christian morality. This pure and holy morality had, indeed, shot a few precursory rays of light into pagan philosophy; but its counsels were without force and without effect, because they were not yet backed by religious authority, because they did not flow from dogma itself, and because they remained strangers to the prevailing cult. The religion of the false gods, on the contrary, appeared to give a permanent lie to those philosophic doctrines which tended to render man better by making him more self-respecting, and more deserving, at the same time, of the esteem of others. This religion, wholly material and wholly sensual, could not prove sufficient to elevated minds and noble hearts, which the Gospel of Christ found ready and waiting; but it required centuries of mysterious labor in the depths of souls in order to assimilate them in a manner to the new faith, the new morality. All the excesses of lust, all the outbursts of passion, all the quests of pleasure were the result of an extreme civilization, which knew no religious bridle and which aspired to no other end than the satisfaction of the most brutal egoism. Never was this egoism pushed further than in the age of the Caesars, who were, so to speak, its monstrous personification.

“Vice is at its apex!” cried Juvenal sorrowfully, frightened by the infamies which he denounces in his satires. *Omne in praecepti vitium stetit*. In a score of places in his book this unhappy stoic curses the turpitudes of his time and regrets the austere virtues of the Romans of the republic: “Look, unhappy one,



to what point of decadence we have come!" he exclaims with bitterness. . . . "We have, it is true, carried our arms to the confines of Hibernia, we have recently subjugated the Orcades and Britain, where the nights are so short; but the conquering people in the Eternal City are doing what the vanquished peoples would not do!" The history of Rome, indeed, before the age of imperial degradation, is full of facts which bear witness, if not to the purity of manners, at least to the rigors of the law relative to public morality. In the year 457 of the foundation of Rome, Quintus Fabius Gurgus, son of the consul, celebrated his aedileship by accusing before the tribunal of the people certain matrons who were in the habit of giving themselves over to debauchery (*matronas stupri damnatas*), and he caused them to be sentenced to an enormous fine, which was employed in erecting a temple to Venus near the great Circus. In the year 539, the aediles of the people, Vilius Rapullus and M. Fundalius, launched a similar accusation against a number of matrons and had them sent into exile. In the year 568, the consul, Postumius, having been advised of certain hideous obscenities which were committed in celebrating the feast of the Bacchanalia, took vigorous measures to extirpate the evil at its root, in an effort to annihilate the sect propagated in darkness under the vain pretext of embracing the mysteries of Bacchus. A young Roman knight named Eubutius came to complain to the consul that his mistress had been arrested at the Bacchanalia. This mistress was no other than a courtesan called Hispala Fecenia; a slave in her youth, she had continued, since her enfranchisement, her ancient trade, although the elevation of her character should have placed her above it. She had contracted with Eubutius a liaison which cast no reflection on the reputation of the young man, although he lived at the expense of the freed woman (*meretriculae munificentia continebatur*). Hispala dwelt on the Aventine hill, where she was well known (*non ignotam viciniae*). The consul had his stepmother, Sulpicia, send for this courtesan, who was not astonished at being asked to the house of a respectable matron. There, Postumius interro-



gated her, in the presence of his stepmother, and obtained a complete revelation of all the horrors which had taken place in the nocturnal Bacchanalia. The following day, he went to the Senate and demanded the means of extirminating an infamous sect which already numbered seven thousand initiates at Rome and in its environs. The Senate shared the indignation of Postumius and pronounced terrible penalties against the abominable instigators of the Bacchanalia. As for Eubutius and his companion, they were generously recompensed; the senate-consult declared that the beautiful Hispala, despite her origin and despite her trade, might marry a man of free condition, without compromising in any manner the fortune and reputation of her husband. She married Eubutius and took the rank of matron, under the safeguard of consuls and praetors, who became her guarantors against all insult. The Bacchanalian festival, dying out under the proscription of the Senate, did not dare to show its head again at Rome until the reign of the emperors.

Public manners were lost, throughout the Roman empire, from the day the chief of State ceased himself to respect manners, and himself instigated vices which he was called upon to repress. Julius Caesar, that great man whose genius raised the Roman power so high by arms, politics and legislation, Julius Caesar was the first to offer to the Romans the corrupting spectacle of such depraved manners. It was said that he desired to prove by this that his ancestor, Aeneas, had transmitted to him something of the blood of Venus. All the historians, Suetonius, Plutarch, Dion Cassius, agree that he was the mouthpiece of the pleasures of love and that he spared, in this matter, no expense: *prorum et sumptuosum una in libidines fuisse*, says Suetonius. He seduced a great number of distinguished women, such as Postumia, wife of Servius Sulpicius; Lollia, the wife of Aulus Gabinius; Tertulla, the wife of Marcus Crassus; and Marcia, the wife of Cneius Pompey; but he loved no woman better than Servilia, mother of Brutus. He gave her, during his first consulate, a pearl which had cost six million sesterces (1,162,500 francs), and at

the time of the civil wars, in addition to the rich gifts with which he loaded her, he had knocked down to her at a low price the finest farms which were sold at auction. When astonishment was expressed at these bargains, Cicero replied with the following epigram: "The price is all the more advantageous, since a third has been deducted." This word play meant: "They have sold Tertia."\* There was a suspicion, as a matter of fact, that Servilia herself had favored scandalous relations between her daughter, Tertia, and her own lover. Caesar had no more respect for the conjugal bed in those provinces through which he passed with his army; after the conquest of the Gauls, on the day of his triumph, his soldiers chanted in unison:

*Urbani, servate uxores, moechum calvum adducimus!  
Aurum in Gallia effutuisti; at hic sumsisti mutuum.*

"Citizens, guard your wives well, for here we bring the bald-headed libertine! Caesar, you have spent in love among the Gauls all the gold which you have gained at Rome!" Julius Caesar was the lover of a number of foreign queens, among others Eunoë, wife of the King of Mauretania. He loved, above all, and with passion, the voluptuous Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, who gave him a son whom he would have chosen to be his heir.

His venereal ardors had so grown, in place of diminishing, with the years, that he desired all the women of the Roman Empire, and he would have liked to be able to dispose of them according to his own choice. He had conceived a singular legal project, which he was ashamed, however, to present for the sanction of the Senate; in accordance with this law, he reserved the right to marry as many women as he wished, in order to have as many children as he was capable of producing. The infamy resulting from his adulteries was so notorious, Suetonius tells us, that Curio, the Elder, in one of his orations, had described him as the *husband of all the wives and the wife of all the husbands*.

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\**Tertius* (feminine: *tertia*): third.

The second part of this annihilating epigram was not, precisely, true, for according to history, Caesar did not more than once in his life commit the sin of *impudicity*, that is to say, by giving himself to vice against nature (this vice alone in the eyes of the Romans was an outrage to modesty); but this unfortunate misstep of Caesar was so widely bruited that an ineffaceable opprobrium was reflected on his name throughout the entire world. The calumny undoubtedly arose from what may have been but an accident of debauchery, and which might have passed unperceived, if the two guilty parties had not been Julius Caesar and the King Nicomedes. Cicero tells us, in his letters, that Caesar was conducted by guards into the chamber of the King of Bithynia; that he slept there, covered with purple, on a couch of gold, and that this descendant of Venus prostituted his virginity to Nicodemus (*floremque aetatis a Venere orti in Bithynia contaminatum*). After this infamous compliance, Caesar lived a butt to the bitterest ironies, but he supported them patiently, without replying and without giving his detractors the lie. On one occasion, Dolabella called him, in the open Senate, the *concubine of a king*, the *Merry-Andrew of the royal couch*; again, the aged Curio referred to him as being of the *lupanar of Nicomedes* and as a *Bithynian prostitute*. One day, when Caesar had undertaken the defense of Nysa, the daughter of Nicomedes, Cicero interrupted him with a gesture of disgust, saying: "Let us pass all that, I beg you; it is only too well known what you have received from Nicomedes and what you have given him!" Another time, it was a certain Octavius who, with impunity, because he was looked upon as a fool, saluted Caesar with the title of *queen* and Pompey with the title of *king*. C. Memmius gives us to understand that he had seen the young Caesar serving Nicomedes at table and pouring wine for him, as though he were one of the King's eunuchs. Finally, when Caesar mounted the Capitoline, after the conquest of Gaul, the soldiers gaily chanted about his triumphal chariot: "Caesar has conquered the Gauls; Nicomedes has conquered Caesar. Caesar triumphs today for

having conquered the Gauls; but Nicomedes does not triumph, he who has conquered Caesar.”

Octavius was no better than Caesar, in the matter of immorality: “His reputation was branded from his youth with more than one opprobrium,” we read in Suetonius. Sextus Pompey treated him as an effeminate; Mark Antony reproached him with having purchased, at the price of his own honor, adoption by his uncle; Lucius, brother to Mark Antony, spread the report that Octavius, after having given the flower of his innocence to Caesar, sold it a second time in Spain to Hirtius for 300,000 sesterces (58,225 francs); Lucius adds that Octavius was in the custom of burning the flesh of his legs with the shells of hot nuts, in order that the hair might grow more slowly. Everyone threw up to him one day, with a malign joy, a verse which had been uttered on the stage to describe a priest of Cybele playing the tambourine: *Viden, ut cinaedus orbem digito temperat?* The equivocation revolved about the word *orbem*, which might be understood at once as a tambourine, as the universe, and as the indecent parts which the finger of a vile *cinaedus* also governed. But later, Octavius refuted these accusations, which may have been calumnies, by the chastity of his manners with regard to a vice with which he could no longer be reproached after he had attained the age of man. As to his manners from another point of view, they were far from being chaste or even reserved. He appeared to have inherited the amorous fury of Julius Caesar toward all women. Despite his laws against adultery, he was not so severe toward himself as toward others, and he did not spare on his own account the nuptial honor of his subjects. Mark Antony pretended that he had been the witness of a singular manifestation of the Emperor’s amours: in the midst of a meal, Augustus sent from the dining room to a neighboring bedroom the wife of a Roman of consular rank, although the husband of this woman was among the invited guests; and when she came back with Augustus, after having given the guests time to empty more than one goblet to the glory of Caesar, the lady’s ears were red and her hair in dis-



order. The husband alone took no notice. Before Mark Antony had declared himself the Emperor's enemy and competitor, he wrote to him familiarly: "What has changed you then? Is it the idea that I possess a Queen? But Cleopatra is my wife, and not a wife of yesterday, for it has been nine years. But are you not content with Livia? Yes, you are such a man that I think you will be capable, when you read this letter, of taking Tertulla or Terentilla or Ruffilla or Salvia Titiscenia or perhaps all of them. Does it make much difference in what place and how your desires are awakened?" (*Anne refert ubi et in quam arrigas?*)

Nevertheless, whatever may have been the incontinence of Augustus himself, he had a certain repugnance for adultery, which impressed him as being a social wound, and which he rigorously endeavored to combat by certain laws. When he permitted himself to commit a refraction of his own legislation, he spared no precaution in hiding a weakness for which he blushed and which he would not confess to his dearest confidant. Thus, we see the poet Ovid paying with his own disgrace for having been the witness of the incestuous amours of the Emperor with his daughter Julia. Augustus undoubtedly did not have to fear any indiscretion on the part of this faithful servitor, who was his rival, or who was looked upon as being; but he did not care to run the risk of having to look constantly in the face a man before whom he had been dishonored. In his youth, these scruples would not have troubled him, since his friends, according to Suetonius, spent their time in seeking out for him married women and marriageable daughters, whom they had brought in nude before them in order to examine them like slaves on sale in the market of Toranius. These sad objects of imperial lust must, before they were chosen and approved, fulfill certain conditions required by the caprices of Augustus, who was curious as to the most secret details of their beauty. It is thus that commentators have interpreted those words, *conditiones quaesitas*, which the historian has left, in a manner, under a transparent veil. The ardor of Augustus for the pleasures of the senses did not grow cold with age,

but he ceased to take his mistresses from among the mothers of families, who no longer inspired in him the same desires, and he fell back exclusively upon the virgins (*ad vitiandas virgines promptier*); they were brought to him from all sides, and his wife even took a hand in introducing them to him. This species of madness could not last always, and old age brought some sort of order. It was then that the passion for women was succeeded by one for gambling, less fatiguing but not less insatiable than the other. Augustus, as he played at dice, would still smile at the throw of Venus (three sixes), which made a royal pair, as he said gaily in a letter to Tiberius.

The immoderate taste for virgins, which he indulged in the latter part of his life came only upon the decline of his virility. While he felt himself young and vigorous, he had lived with his first wife, Claudia, who was scarcely marriageable, without claiming the rights of a husband; for she was no less a virgin than on the eve of her marriage, when he separated himself from her to marry Scribonia, the widow of two consuls. He also repudiated Scribonia, because of the perversity of manners in this mother of a family. He married, for a third time, Livia Drusilla, whom he had taken away from Tiberius Nero, by whom she was pregnant; he loved her constantly, despite his perpetual infidelities, which he did not even take the pains to hide. Satisfied at being loved above all the rest, Livia did not look upon all the venal women who succeeded her in her husband's arms as rivals. However enormous the excesses of Augustus in his gray hairs may have been, they were always effaced in public opinion by those of his youth. There had been much talk, in particular, of a certain mysterious supper which was vulgarly called the *Feast of the Twelve Divinities*, a supper at which the guests, clad as gods and goddesses, imitated the indecent scenes which ancient poetry had located on Olympus, under the influence of the ambrosia which Hebe and Ganymede poured for them on their rounds. In this orgy, Octavius had portrayed Apollo, and an anonymous satirist immortalized these obscene impieties in the following famous

verses: "When Caesar dared take the mask of Apollo and celebrate at a feast the adulteries of the gods, the indignant gods retired far from the domain of mortals, and Jupiter himself abandoned his gilded temples." This supper, the details of which were never well known, coincided with the famine to which Rome was then a prey: "The gods have eaten all the wheat!" remarked the Romans, on learning that Olympus had supped in the palace of Caesar: "If Caesar is, in truth, the god Apollo," murmured the more daring ones, "he is Apollo the executioner." The god was adored under the name of *Tortor*, in a quarter of the city where instruments of torture were sold, among others, lashes. According to one scholiast, this insulting epithet was applied to Augustus by allusion to a rôle which he had played in this nocturnal fete.

The orgies of Augustus were naïve and innocent compared to those which were the distraction of the old Tiberius. This Emperor, who had been led gradually, through his passion for drink, into the most hideous vices, still prided himself on being the reformer of Roman manners; he improved upon the severity of the laws which his predecessor had made against adultery; he re-established the ancient custom of causing sentence to be pronounced on women who had been unfaithful to the marriage bond in an assemblage of their relatives, who must vote unanimously; as to husbands who closed their eyes to the scandalous conduct of their wives, he forced them to repudiate with much show their immodest mates; he exiled to the desert islands those patrician women who had had themselves registered as prostitutes in order to be free to follow their own licentious inclinations; he banished from Rome those young libertines of free condition who, in order to obtain the right of appearing in the theater or in the arena, had voluntarily requested of a tribunal the brand of infamy. But he himself took no account of the austere prescriptions of his own jurisprudence, and his object appeared to be to commit crimes or acts of baseness which had not been thought of before his time. His acts as a supreme magistrate and his mode of life presented,



incessantly, the strangest contradictions; one day, in the Senate, he harshly apostrophized Sestius Gallus, a prodigal and libidinous old man, who had been branded by Augustus; and a few moments later, in leaving, he invited himself to take supper at the house of this old libertine on condition that there should be no change in the habits of the house and that the meal should be served, as ordinarily, by naked young girls (*nudis puellis ministrantibus*). Another time, while he was laboring for the reform of manners, he passed two days and a night at a table with Pomponius Flaccus and L. Piso, whom he recompensed for their infamous accommodations by naming one governor of Syria and the other prefect of Rome, calling them, in his letters patent, "those most delicious friends at all hours." He punished with death the man or woman who did not yield at once to his unclean desires. It was to avenge himself for a refusal of this sort that he had the beautiful Malonnia, who preferred death to shame, accused by his informers. During the trial, he besought her to repent, but she killed herself with a sword, after having cried out that the Emperor was "an old man with an obscene mouth, hairy and stinking as a goat." And so, at the first games which were celebrated after this tragic adventure, all the spectators applauded in applying to Tiberius this passage of an *atellana*: "An old goat licking the she-goats (*hircum vetulum capreis naturam ligurare*)." The people had nicknamed the emperor *Caprineus*, alluding at once to his goat-like manners and to his habit of dwelling in the island of Capri.

Following is the account which Suetonius gives of the abominable life which this monster led in the depths of his retreat: "He conceived a great chamber which he made the seat of his most secret debaucheries. There, chosen troops of young girls and young boys, directed by the inventors of a monstrous form of Prostitution, and whom he called *spinthriae* (sparks), formed a triple chain and, mutually enlaced, passed in front of him, in order, by this spectacle, to revive his exhausted senses. He had, also, a number of chambers variously arranged for the same pur-

pose; he adorned them with pictures and bas-reliefs representing the most lascivious subjects; he assembled here the books of Elephantis, in order that the model might not be lacking for the circumstance (*ne cui in opera edenda exemplar inperatae schemae deesset*). In the woods and in the forest were to be seen nothing but asylums consecrated to Venus, and it was his desire that the grottoes and the hollows of the rocks should constantly afford him a view of amorous couples in the costumes of nymphs and satyrs. . . . He carried his baseness still further, to a degree of excess which it would be as difficult to believe as to describe: he had infants of the tenderest age, whom he called his *little fish*—*ut natanti sibi inter femina versarentur ac luderent, lingua morsuque sensim appetentes, atque etiam, quali infantes firmiores, necdum tamen lacte depulsos, inguini ceu papillae admoveret*—a species of pleasure to which his age and his temperament made him prone. Thus, some one having left him by legacy the picture of Parrhasius, in which Atlantis prostitutes her mouth to Meleager, and the will giving him the right to take, in place of this picture, if the subject should prove displeasing to him, a million sesterces (193,750 francs), he preferred the picture, and had it placed as a sacred object in his bedroom. It was said, also, that one day, during the sacrifice, he was taken with the beauty of a young lad who was bearing the incense; he could barely wait till the ceremony was achieved in order to satisfy his ignoble passion, to which, also, the brother of the unhappy lad, whom he had remarked playing the flute, was forced to lend himself; then, when the brothers reproached each other with their disgrace, he had their legs cut off. The physical portrait of Tiberius completes the picture of his manners: “He was large and robust, of a height above the ordinary, large of shoulders and breast, well built and well proportioned. He was more adroit with and stronger in the left hand than in the other; the joints were so strong that with them he could pierce a green apple, and with a fillip he could wound the head of a child or even that of

a young man. . . . His face was handsome, but subject to being suddenly covered with pimples. . . .”

Caligula, still less reserved than Tiberius, whom he endeavored to imitate, brazenly advertised his infamous amours with Marcus Lepidus, the comedian, Mnester, and a number of hostages with whom he had had reciprocal relations (*commercio mutui stupri*). Valerius Catullus, son of an ex-consul, reproached him one day with having abused his youth (*stupratum ase ac latera sibi contubernio ejus defessa, etiam vociferatus est*); but, gross and brutal in his pleasures, he did not vary them with any effort at refinement, and it was gluttony rather than lust which inspired the disorders of his imagination. He sought the extraordinary and the monstrous, except in love, which was not even a pretext for his prodigalities. “Without speaking of his incests with his sisters and of his well-known passion for the courtesan, Pyrallis,” Suetonius relates, “he did not respect any woman of high distinction (*non temere ulla illustriore femina abstinuit*).” Ordinarily, he invited these ladies to supper with their husbands, and there, making them pass in front of him, examined them long and minutely, in the fashion of slave merchants. Then, after a number of sallies, leaving the banquet hall with the one who had pleased him, he brought her back soon, without any effort to hide the stains of his recent debauch, and praised or criticized in a high tone of voice the unfortunate one, whose beauties or bodily imperfections he enumerated, as well as his own exploits. He repudiated a few in the name of their absent husbands, and he caused these divorces to be inserted among the public acts. “Moreover, Caligula caused his exploits of this sort to be forgotten by his ingenious cruelties, by his foolish expenditures and by his pitiless exactions. Among the bizarre and ignoble taxes which he established at Rome, we must cite the *vectigal* of Prostitution; each prostitute was taxed in the amount which she demanded for the sale of her body (*ex capturis prostitutarum, quantum quaeque uno concubitu mereret*). The Emperor afterwards added to this chapter of the law a provision to the effect that a

similar tax might be exacted of all, men and women, who had led the lives of lenones and meretrices. It is to be understood that the fixing of the amount of this tax could not have been other than arbitrary and optional.

But one of the most singular facts of the reign of Caligula is the foundation and opening of a lupanar in the palace of the Caesars. This monstrous fact, which is reported by Dion Cassius and by Suetonius, has appeared so unlikely to a number of critics that they have seen an alteration of the text in that passage which Dion, in their opinion, had confidently copied from Suetonius, amplifying and poetizing upon the original. According to these critics, it was a matter of a gambling house and not of a lupanar. Dion merely adds to the account of the Latin historian that Caligula had taken from the Gauls the idea of his imperial lupanar. "In order that there might be no exactions which were not taken care of in practice, he established a lupanar in the palace; there, a great number of cells were constructed and adorned according to the convenience of the place; and these cells were occupied by matrons and ingenuae. The Emperor sent his criers around to the public places and the basilicas in order to invite young people and old men to debauchery (*in libidinem*). The arrivals were called upon to borrow money at usury and the names of those were taken who paid most, as though they were subscribing thus to increase the revenues of Caesar." These details are, as a matter of fact, very vague and very obscure; they are applicable to a gambling house rather than to a lupanar, and nothing is said, especially, of that loan which waited the newcomers who had been recruited by the criers on the public highway. Suetonius would understand, by this, that the price of this Prostitution, under the guaranty of the emperor was so great that no one had enough silver upon his person to pay for it. What makes us suppose that this pretended lupanar was but a gambling house, directed by the matrons and the sons of families (*ingenui*) is that Suetonius adds immediately certain details which could only have to do with games of chance (*alea*), in which Caligula



made use of fraud and perjury in order to be sure of always being the winner.

However this may be, if the employment of the prefect of pleasures (*a voluptatibus*) created by Tiberius, lasted till the reign of Nero, it is certain that the imperial lupanar did not last beyond the time of Caligula, who had invented it, and who drew large benefits from it. His successor, Claudius, was not less cruel, nor less sanguinary than himself, but he did not achieve such successes of immodesty. He had too many legitimate wives to have many mistresses, and those whom he took, out of caprice rather than out of love, did not gain sufficient notoriety for history to speak of them. Suetonius, who is careful to record the marriages and divorces of Claudius, while flaying the shameful debaucheries (*libidinum probra*) of his first wife, Urgulanilla, and the startling outbursts of the third, Messalina—Suetonius forms a general judgment with regard to the manners of this Emperor: “He loved women passionately, but he had no relations with men (*libidinis in feminas profussissimae, marium ominno expers*).” Whatever the habits of Claudius may otherwise have been, they were far from equalling those of this Messalina who has been immortalized by Juvenal (see the famous fragment of Satire VI and whose name has become, in all languages, the synonym of the most brazen Prostitution. We must look to Tacitus for the recital of the crimes and impudicities of this Empress (Book XI), who had dared, during the life of the Emperor, to be publicly married to Silius and to celebrate this adulterous marriage by an orgy, in which she played the role of bacchante. Despite the identity of a courtesan named Lysisca, who resembled Messalina, and who had passed herself off as the latter in the practice of her trade as a prostitute, we shall not undertake to prove that Messalina has been caluminated by history and that a fatal resemblance alone has been the cause of her infamous celebrity.

The example of Messalina appears to have encouraged Nero to surpass his predecessors in the crimes of Prostitution. As soon

as he had raised the mask which disguised his evil inclinations, he hurled himself into all the excesses which the refinements of debauchery had been able to imagine and gave free rein to all his vices. At first, he still imposed some restraint in giving himself to debauchery, to lust and to his petulant passions, which might have been made to pass as the errors of youth. As soon as night fell, he would cover his head with a bonnet of a freed man or with the cape of a muleteer in order to run about the wine shops and suspected places. He would wander through the streets, insulting women, giving worse insults to the men and striking all who resisted him. He compromised himself thus with the vilest meretrices, with the most unworthy lenons; he beat them often and sometimes had himself beaten. This was, according to himself, an adroit manner of studying the people at close range and of learning to live the life of a simple citizen. As the keepers of the lupanars, the masters of slaves, the proprietors of the wine shops and the bakers had threatened to break his bones, he did not go out anymore without being followed at a distance by an armed guard, who would come at need to lend him forcible assistance. But he soon disdained to hide his manners, and he took pleasure, on the contrary, in advertising them before all the world, without worrying about scandal or blame. Thus, we see him supping in public, either on the Field of Mars or in the great Circus, and there he had himself served by all the prostitutes of Rome and by foreign flute players (*inter scortorum totius urbis ambubaiarumque ministeria*).

This was not all; every time he went to Ostium by way of the Tiber, or every time he sailed around the Gulf of Baiae, they established along the banks hostelrys and places of debauchery where matrons, playing the rôle of mistresses of the inn, with a thousand cajoleries would invite him to pause. He would stop frequently, and his trip would thus be prolonged for a number of weeks. One prefect of pleasures did not suffice for him; he instituted, in addition, an arbiter of pleasure, and this was Petronius, who appears to have filled this difficult place to the satis-



faction of Nero. He was not only the abiter of pleasure, but also of elegance (*elegantiae arbiter*, says Tacitus), and Tigellinus could not pardon him for being so clever in the science of pleasures (*scientiâ voluptatum potiozem*). One cannot believe, however, that Petronius *arbiter* would have approved the abominal impudicities which the Emperor permitted himself without the least hesitation, as soon as the idea came to him. Tacitus, Suetonius, Xithilinus and Aurelius Victor have spoken of these infamies; but in this hideous picture, they have avoided painting in detail the vile ones who shared the imperial orgy or who seconded the Emperor in his turpitudes. Suetonius, after having mentioned the pedagogic commerce of Nero with the ingenus (*ingenuorum paedagogia*) and his adulteries with married women, accuses him simply of having violated the Vestal, Rubria. He is more explicit with regard to his execrable marriage with Sporus and his incest with his mother.

Sporus was a young boy of incomparable beauty; Nero fell hopelessly in love with him and he wished that Sporus had been a woman; he endeavored, from a detestable freak of the imagination, to change the sex of the young man, whom he caused to be mutilated (*ex sectis testibus etiam in muliebre transfigurare conatus*). Then, having given him a dowry and adorned him with a nuptial veil like a bride, he went through a pompous marriage ceremony in which he espoused his Sporus (*celeberrimo officio deductum ad se pro uxore habuit*), under the gaze of a numerous assemblage, which applauded this odious masquerade. Someone who assisted at this fete permitted himself a bon mot, which might have cost him dearly: "It would have been better for the human race if the father of Nero, Domitius, had taken such a wife!" Nero remained a long time enamoured of Sporus, whom he clad in the costumes of his empresses, and whom he had no shame in being seen with in public; he traveled into Greece with his mignon and upon his return to Rome, he showed himself in a litter with him during the fetes, and they were to be seen embracing at every moment (*identidem exosculans*). As to his

mother, Agrippina, it was she, according to Tacitus, who first aroused the senses of Nero in order to put a good face on an immodest liaison of her own; but Nero, even while he was abandoning himself wholly to criminal amours, would not give his accomplice the power she desired, and he was not slow in tiring of the importunities which he had brought down upon himself as a punishment for his incest. According to Suetonius, he had been foolishly in love with Agrippina, without arriving at the accomplishment of his guilty desires, either because Agrippina had the cleverness and the ability to keep him at a respectful distance, or rather, because he had been dissuaded by his confidants, who made him understand the danger of placing himself thus under the subjection of an imperious woman. He preserved always, with regard to his mother, a libertine intention which translated itself into impure actions when he rode in the litter with her. (*Olim etiam, quoties lectica cum matre veheretur, libidinum incestu, ac maculis vestis proditum, affirmant.*) What is more, in order that the illusion might better present the appearance of reality, he admitted to the number of his concubines a courtesan who singularly resembled Agrippina.

Nero prided himself on being a poet, and he was attracted by all the poetic fictions and by incredible caprices of erotic fury; thus, he endeavored to imitate the metamorphoses of the gods by clothing himself in the skins of wild beasts and hurling himself, sometimes as a wolf, sometimes as a lion, sometimes as a swan, and sometimes as a bull, on women or men, chained or free, whom he bit, clawed and mutilated at his pleasure (*suam quidem pudicitiam usque adeo prostituit, ut contaminatis paene omnibus membris, novissime quasi genus lusus excogitaret, quo ferae pelle contactus emitteretur e cavea, virorumque ac faeminarum ad stipitem deliagtorum inguina invaderet*). He renewed, in this manner, the fable of Andromeda, of Leda, of Io and of many other contemporaries of the heroic ages. Then, exulted by these obscene masquerades, he became persuaded that the favoring gods had changed him into a woman, and he gave himself

to his freed man Diophorus, counterfeiting the cries of a young virgin. (*Et quum affatim desaevisset, conficeretur a Doryphoro liberto, cui etiam, sicut ipsi Sporus, ita ipse denup-sit, voces quoque et ejaculatus vim patientium virginum imita-tus.*) Such a monster had not arrived at this apex of villainy without causing the contempt which he had for himself to be shared by all humanity; he was convinced that no man was absolutely chaste nor exempt from physical stain (*neminem hominem pudicum, aut ulla corporis parte purum esse*), but he thought that the majority knew how to dissimulate their vices and to hide them cleverly. "Thus," says Suetonius, "he pardoned all other faults to anyone who confessed his lubricity in front of him." This miserable Emperor well deserved to die, weeping, in the arms of the infamous Sporus, who did not mingle his blood with that of his companion in debauchery, whom he detested, since Nero had a body all covered with spots and ulcers, which exhaled an infectious odor and which were the result of his life. It was his concubine, Acte, who laid his ashes to rest, covering them with tears, in the tomb of the Domitians.

Galba, although he claimed descent from Pasiphaë and her bull, did not have the temperament and the health necessary to continue the enormous excesses of Nero. He was excessively thin, despite the promise of his name, which meant *large* in the Gallic language, and this hectic emaciation suggested the infamy of his habits: he preferred to young men those who were robust and even old (*libidinus in mares pronioris, et eos, non nisi prae-duros, exoletosque*). When Icilus, one of his ancient male concubines (*veteribus concubinis*) came to him in Spain to announce the death of Nero, the story is told that, not content with embracing him indecently in front of everyone, he caused him to be depilated and led him away to bed (*non modo artissimis osculis palam exceptum ab eo, sed ut sine morâ velleretur, oratum atque seductum*).

Otho, who did not leave Galba time to *enjoy his youth*, as the camp followers of the army said while they bore the Emperor's

head on the end of a lance, was a pupil and accomplice of Nero; from his infancy, he had been prodigal and debauched, a frequenter of bad houses and given to all excesses. At the age of ambition, he attached himself, for worldly reasons, to a freed woman of the court, who thought much of him, and he even pretended to be in love with her, although she was old and decrepit. It was by this means that he insinuated himself into the good graces of Nero, to whom he rendered ignominious services. He broke, however, with the Emperor on account of Poppaea, whom they quarreled over and whom Otho was obliged to abandon to his stronger rival. It may be supposed that his manners had only become more corrupt during the years; and his manner of life may be appreciated by the description of his toilet, which bears witness to his effeminate tastes: "he had his whole body depilated and wore upon his head, which was almost bald, false hair, fixed and arranged with so much art that no one could perceive it. He shaved his face every day with great care and massaged himself with moistened bread, a habit he had contracted when his throat first came to be covered with a light down, in order that he might never have a beard."

But Otho, proclaimed Emperor at Rome, barely had the leisure to order a few secret orgies in the palace of the Caesars; he had to march to meet Vitellius, who came to dispute his title to the Empire, and he slew himself with his own hand, after three successive defeats, although his small figure and his feminine exterior did not promise so much courage. Vitellius, his conqueror and his successor, had been dishonored in his youth by his passion for a freed woman, whose saliva, mixed with honey, he was in the habit of swallowing as a sovereign remedy against sore throat, to which he was subject. He had been, moreover, reared in the school of Prostitution; for he had passed his infancy at Capri, among the favorites of Tiberius, and he remained branded with the name of *Spinthria*, for the reason that he had directed the *spinthriae* of the old Emperor. He continued to soil himself with the same infamies, after he had reached the age of an old bull, as



he himself said jokingly, and he became, in turn, the unclean companion of Caligula, of Claudius and of Nero; but from then on he was violently smitten with a freed man, named Asiaticus, who had been his obscene companion at Capri (*mutua libidine constupratum*), who sought always to escape him without being able to do so. Vitellius would find him again, sometimes selling sour wine to the muleteers, sometimes fighting among the gladiators, and as soon as he had laid eyes on the fellow once more, he would be moved by the shameful memories of his youth, and he would lay hold again of this none too docile victim and seek to win him by presents and honors; he made of his Asiaticus a Governor of a province and a knight! When old age had rendered him obese, he sacrificed lust to gluttony, declaring that the stomach was the most obliging and the strongest part of the body, as opposed to the others, which grew weak with use. He so developed the capacity of his stomach that he could eat almost without interruption, when he was not sleeping, and his insatiable gluttony was renewed at all hours from the habit he had of not waiting to vomit until the work of digestion had commenced; he might thus, every day, enjoy four meals, which filled the day and a part of the night. His senses grew heavy and only awakened at intervals, in the midst of these continual feasts, where he rarely invoked Venus as he emptied enormous goblets and devoured whole lampreys. His fearful corpulence, his face red and pimply, his protruding abdomen and his frail legs bore witness to the fact that he had passed at table all the time of his reign, and that he had not tired himself by running after the fugitive pleasures of love.

After having had a voracious Emperor, Rome had an avaricious one, who abstained from the ruinous excesses of his predecessors, and who did not fall into their ill repute. Vespasian, while persecuting the Christians, could not help, despite himself, undergoing the influence of Christianity. He understood that the dignity of man demanded a certain restraint in manners, and that the chief of state must, to a certain degree, set the example



of respect which each was called upon to show to public opinion. The State was the basic principle of this quasi-Christian philosophy which Vespasian put into practice; his cold and austere temperament permitted him to be on good terms with morality. He combatted debauchery by a few sage rules, and especially by his own decent and regular way of life. He lived, however, in concubinage after the death of his wife, Flavia Domitilla, with an ancient mistress named Cenis, a freed woman of Antonia, the mother of Cladius, to whom she had served as secretary; but this illegitimate alliance had become, in time, as respectable as a marriage sanctioned by the law, and Cenis held with the Emperor the rank of a true spouse. Vespasian himself remained faithful to her, not only because he loved her, but more so for the reason that he loved no other. And yet, Suetonius tells us that one woman feigned for him a violent passion and ended by triumphing over his disdain and persuading him that she would inevitably die if she did not obtain from him a proof of tenderness. This proof having been granted, Vespasian relaxed his accustomed avarice to the point of paying the lady 400,000 sesterces (77,500 francs), and this in honor of the novelty of the thing. His steward having asked him how he should enter the sum in the royal accounts: "Put it," said Vespasian, "*For a passion inspired by the Emperor (Vespasiano, ait, adamato).*" Altogether chaste as he was in his manners, Vespasian descended sometimes to gross pleasantries and did not even abstain from obscene expressions (*praetextatis verbis*).

Titus, before succeeding his father, Vespasian, had made for himself the worst reputation in Rome, where his cruelty and his intemperance had alienated the popular sympathies; he prolonged to the middle of the night his debauches at table with the most dissolute of his familiars; he was always to be seen surrounded by a troupe of eunuchs or of gitons (*exoletorum et spadonum greges*); he was accused also of rapacity, and it was said, openly, that he would be another Nero; but he changed suddenly, as soon as he had mounted the throne, and he reigned like a phi-

osopher, conforming himself, without knowing it, to the precepts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; like his father, he did not persecute the Christians, who admired in him the model of all the Christian virtues, and so, he was wept by all his people when he died suddenly, declaring that he had never done in all his life but one action which he repented. Suetonius supposes that this was a culpable liaison with Domitia, the wife of Titus' brother, but the Emperor always protested his innocence, calling upon the gods to be his witness: "She was not the woman to deny such a relation," the historian adds. "If it had existed, she would have been the first to boast of it, as of all her infamies."

Domitia, on the other hand, did not deny her adulterous relations with the actor, Paris, whom she loved to distraction; and Domitian, proclaimed Emperor, was obliged to repudiate her, or at least to send her away for a time, in order to satisfy public indignation. He took her back soon, declaring that, despite all the carryings on of that other Messalina, he could not do without her and that she took the place of a hundred mistresses. He had given Domitia a rival, however; it was the daughter of his brother Titus; he had seduced her and taken her away from her husband, even during the life of Titus. He manifested for her the most unbridled passion, and he was the cause of her death by forcing her to submit to an abortion, being doubtful himself of the paternity of the child. He was, otherwise, all too given to the pleasures of love, which he called the *gymnastic of the bed* (*libidinis nimiae, assiduitatem concubitus, velut exercitationis genus, Plye-opalen vocabat*). We are assured that it was his amusement himself to depilate his concubines, when he was not impaling flies on a needle, and he bathed himself in vast *piscinae* along with the vilest prostitutes (*nataretque inter vulgatissimas meretrices*). All the time, despite his debauchery, Domitian was occupied with the reform of manners, and he demanded the application of a number of ancient police laws, which had fallen into desuetude; thus, while Clodius Pollio, nicknamed the One-Eyed, was circulating a copy of an autographed note in which Domitian, then young and given to infamous vices, promised him a night (*noc-*

*tem sibi pollicentis*), the Emperor was condemning, by virtue of the *lex Scantinia*, a number of Roman knights who had been convicted of the crime of pederasty. It was he who forbade dishonored women the use of the litter (*probosis feminis lecticae usum ademit*), and who established terrible penalties against incest with Vestals; he caused to be interred alive the great Vestal, Cornelia, who had more than one accomplice, and these accomplices were beaten with rods until death followed; other Vestals, the sisters Ocellata and Varronilla, had the liberty of choosing their manner of death, and their seducers went into exile. Finally, Domitian, undoubtedly ashamed at casting a reflection upon himself, erased from the list of judges a Roman knight who had taken back his wife after having repudiated her and hauled her before the tribunals as an adulteress.

But evangelic morality was dawning on all sides, and paganism seemed to be blushing for its own prostitutions, justified by the history of the false gods. Christian philosophy had been infiltrated in the doctrine of Plato; and the emperors, who held it an honor to be philosophers, applied themselves to correcting their own vices and to putting a bridle on their own passions. Thus, the old Nerva who, on the word of Suetonius, had corrupted the young Domitian; Trajan, who loved young boys, which Xiphilinus does not condemn; Adrian, who would have sacrificed his Empire for his favorite, Antinous, whom he deified, and who was looked upon as the most finished of voluptuaries (*quae adultorum amore ac nuptarum adulteriis, quibus Adrianus laborasse dicitur, asserunt*); these three Emperors reigned as sages and labored to rebuild Roman society on the basis of decency, justice, modesty and religion, the outcome of the new faith. Antoninus the Pious and Marcus Aurelius were truly Christian Emperors, and under their glorious reigns, one might have believed that the Gospel was about to become the universal code of humanity. But paganism, flouted in its material tendencies and withered in its organic depravation, had to make a last stand under Commodus and under Heliogabalus, in an effort to drag the Roman world into the final Saturnalia of Prostitution.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE family of the Antonii, after having placed on the imperial throne two great philosophers who endeavored to regenerate the pagan world with morality, had to produce the infamous Commodus and find extinction with Heliogabalus. The abominations of these two last reigns provide a sorrowful contrast with the fine virtues of an Antoninus and a Marcus Aurelius, who even caused their glorious predecessors, Trajan and Adrian, to be forgotten. Marcus Aurelius had foreseen his son Commodus would one day be like Nero, Caligula and Domitian; he regretted that he did not die before he had seen this fatal premonition realized. If Commodus had had nothing worse than bad manners, his father would have shut his eyes on what was no more than something ordinarily to be found in youth and temperament; thus Marcus Antoninus tolerated the licentious life of his adopted son, Lucius Verus, whom he had associated with him in the government of the Empire but who, he knew, was given to all the sensual pleasures; but Lucius Verus, in giving himself to debaucheries with dancing girls, buffoons and courtezans, took care to shut himself up in the interior of his palace and never wore outside the palace anything but a decent, honorable and almost austere habit. The excesses of his private life had no influence on his public life, and he might appear by the side of Marcus Aurelius without reflecting on that virtuous emperor the scandal of his own vices.

But Commodus, on the contrary, would not have been satisfied if his base habits had not had a thousand witnesses and a thousand echoes; it was for him a pleasure and a necessity to appear vile in the eyes of all. Moreover, lustful abuse had superexcited his senses to such a point that, in order to content them, he had to have recourse to an effusion of blood; he was naturally



cruel, and with him, cruelty developed into a brutal passion which mingled with all the transports of erotic fury. "From his tenderest infancy," we are told by Lampridius, who in his writings followed Greek and Latin historians who are lost today, "from his earliest infancy, he was immodest, wicked, cruel and libidinous, and he even soiled his mouth." (*Turpis, improbus, crudelis, libidinosus, ore quoque pollutus, constupratus fuit.*) And yet, a short time after he had taken the *toga virilis*, on his return from the expedition in Egypt, where he had accompanied his father, he shared triumphal honors with the divine Marcus Aurelius. He dismissed the sages and worthy preceptors who had been given him and surrounded himself with the most corrupt men; his friends had been taken away from him momentarily, but when he fell ill with chagrin on this account, they were given back to him, and from that time on, he no longer placed a bridle on his impudicities. He made of the palace a tavern and a place of debauchery (*popinas et ganeas in palatinis semper aedibus fecit*); he drew to him those women who were the most remarkable for their beauty, as slaves attached to the lupanars, in order to make them serve all his impure caprices (*mulierculas formae scitioris, ut prostibula mancipia lupanarium, ad ludibrium pudicitiae contraxit*). Finally, he lived with gladiators and meretrices; he haunted the houses of prostitution and, disguised as a eunuch, he entered the cells of the women in order to bring water or refreshments (*aquam gessit ut lenonum magister*).

When Marcus Aurelius died at Rome, Commodus made war on the barbarians on the banks of the Danube, where he sighed incessantly for the delights of Italy; he hastened, then, to quit his soldiers, who had saluted him as Emperor, and he was received with acclamation by the Romans, who did not remember the vices of his youth, as they looked upon him and saw that he was so handsome and well built: "There was nothing effeminate in his manner," said Herodian, "his glance was at once gentle and vivacious; his hair curled and very blond; when he walked in the sun, his hair cast a gleam so dazzling that it seemed it had been

powdered with gold." But this radiant beauty, which had no equal, if we are to believe Herodian, was soon withered in orgies, where Commodus consulted less his strength than his insatiable desires; his robust constitution could not resist continual assaults, and he soon found himself a weak man, his back bent, his head trembling, his complexion pimply, his eyes red and his lips slobbering. He ever had, as the result of a number of shameful maladies, so large a tumor on his groins that it showed through his silken garments. On the day of his entry into Rome, while the enthusiasm of the people was directed especially to his charming figure and his good bearing, he had, mounted behind him on his chariot, his mignon (*subactore suo*), Anterus, and during the whole ceremony of triumph, he would turn at every instant to give kisses to this vile person; their ignoble caresses continued in the theatre, amid the applause of the spectators.

Commodus took up, from the start, the life which he had led during the lifetime of his father; in the evening he made the rounds of the taverns and the bad houses (*vespera etiam per tabernas ac lupanaria volitavit*); at night, he would drink till dawn in the company of Anterus and his other favorites. As to the affairs of Empire, he left the care of these to Perennis, who persuaded him to think only of his own pleasures, and who freed him of the burdens of government; this was an agreement entered into between them when Commodus lost Anterus, whom the prefects of the praetorium caused to be assassinated in order to escape the tyrannic caprices of this favorite. Commodus could not console himself for this loss except by plunging into still stranger pleasures; he almost never showed himself any more in public; he lived shut up in the palace, where he had assembled three hundred concubines, chosen for their beauty by his purveyors, and who had been selected indifferently among the matrons and the prostitutes. To these concubines he had added, for his own use, three hundred cinaedi chosen equally among the nobility and the people, and not less remarkable than the women for the perfection of their bodies. These six hundred guests sat at

his table and offered themselves in turn to his impure fancy (*in palatio per convivia et balneas bacchatur*). When physical force failed him, he called to his aid all the powers of his imagination; he obliged his concubines to give themselves under his eyes to pleasures which he was no longer capable of sharing with them (*ipsas concubinas suas sub oculis suis stuprari jubebat*). These voluptuous tableaux had the power of reviving his exhausted senses, and he would become once more an actor in these obscene bacchanalia, where the sexes were confounded, and where Prostitution had recourse to the most horrible artifices (*nec irruentium in se juvenum carebat infamia, omni parte corporis apque ore in sexum utrumque pollutus*). It was no longer, as with Tiberius and Nero, an ardor for assuaging enormous physical passions; it was, rather, the indefatigable quest of a depraved imagination, which only aspired to render life to his failing senses. Thus, Commodus tortured his mind to invent, in the guise of philtres, the most odious combinations of obscenities. After having violated his sisters and his relatives, he gave the name of his mother to one of his concubines in order to persuade himself that he was committing an incest with her. He did not spare any of those who were attached to his person, and he submitted them to shameful tasks without refusing to be a party to such tasks himself (*omne genus hominum infamavit quod erat secum et ab omnibus est infamatus*). Woe to the one who permitted himself to laugh or mock; he sent to the beasts the untimely jester. "He loved by preference," says Lampridus, "those who bore the names of the shameful parts of one or the other sex, and he embraced these by preference." (*Habuit in deliciis homines appellatos nominibus verendorum utriusque sexus, quos libentius suis osculis applicabat.*) A variation of the Latin text, *oculis* in place of *osculis*, occurs in this passage, giving us to understand that he was content with looking on them with more curiosity than those who bore respectable names. Among his boon companions, he had picked out a freed man whom he called Onon (*onos*, an ass), on account of a certain obscene anology with that animal; he en-

riched him and made him the high priest of Hercules of the Fields, as a reward of merit. (*Habuit et hominem pene prominente ultra modum animalium, quem Onon appellavit, sibi, charissimum*). He had himself named *Hercules* by the Senate, which had already decreed him the surnames of *Pious* and *Fortunate*.

One could not depict, without horror, the debauches, stains with human blood, which this apotheosized monster practiced with a sort of infernal genius; he did not respect even the temples of the gods (*deorum templa stupris polluit et humano sanguine*). He loved to wear women's clothes and to put on feminine airs; sometimes he would dress himself like Hercules with a vestment embossed with gold and a lion's skin: "It was a ridiculous and bizarre thing," says Herodian, "for him thus to make a parade, at once, of feminine affectations and the strength of heroes." At these feasts, he frequently mingled excrements with the most delicate viands and he did not hesitate to taste these himself in order to have the pleasure of forcing others to eat them (*dicitursaepe pretiosissimis cibis humana stercora miscuisse, nec abstinuisse gustu, aliis, ut putabat irrisis*). The faces which the guests made as they imitated him procured him a malicious and boundless pleasure. One day, he ordered a prefect of the Julian praetorium to take off his clothes and dance nude, his face smeared and playing the cymbals in front of the courtezans and gitons, who applauded largely; he ended by having the fellow tossed into a fish pond, where the lampreys devoured him. He did not fail to have solemnly inscribed among the public acts of Rome all the shameful, impure and cruel deeds that he committed, in a word, all his prowesses as gladiator and debauchee (*omnia quae turpiter, quae impure, quae crudeliter, quae gladiatorie, quae lenonice facert*).

Finally, this execrable Emperor, after having escaped a number of conspiracies formed against his life, was assassinated, at the instigation of Marcia, his best loved concubine. Marcia loved him also, despite his crimes, and she watched over his days like an attentive mother, perhaps out of pity rather than out of love.



Commodus had the idea of celebrating the first day of the year by a fete, in which he would go to the circus armed with his club and preceded by all his gladiators. Marcia besought him to do nothing of the sort, and all the officers of the imperial household also begged him not to expose himself in this manner to the daggers of assassins. The Emperor, irritated at the opposition which he encountered on the part of his most faithful servitors, resolved to disembararrass himself of them by condemning them to death. He wrote the names of the condemned ones on a piece of linden bark, which he hid under his pillow. "He had at his heart," reports Herodian, "one of those small children who served the pleasures of Roman voluptuaries, and who were kept half clad, their beauty heightened by precious stones. He loved this one to distraction and had had him called *Philocommode*." The child entered the bedroom, found on the floor the list of proscribed ones and bore it away as a plaything. Marcia saw this list in the child's hands, and took it away, caressingly: "Courage, Commodus, do not give yourself the lie," she cried as she read her name and the others. "So this is the recompense I receive for my tenderness and for the long patience with which I have borne your brutalities and your debaucheries! . . . But it shall not be said that a man who is always buried in wine shall overcome a woman who is sober and has her reason!" In short, she went, on the spot, to warn those who were to share her fate, and she poured with her own hands the poison into the cup of Commodus, who threatening to survive, was strangled by a slave named Narcissus, whom Marcia had won over to her side by promising to abandon herself to him. "Commodus was crueller than Domitian, impurer than Nero!" acclaimed the Senate, which decreed that the corpse should be drawn with a grappling iron to the potters field, where the bodies of dead gladiators were interred.

One might believe that Commodus would never be surpassed in the annals of Prostitution, but that would be to forget Helio-gabalus, who has left in history an ineffaceable stain and a unique and infamous celebrity. Lampridus, in writing of the impure



(*impurissiman*) life of this monster, after the contemporary Greeks and Latins who had written before him, was almost ashamed of his work, although he has passed over in silence a hoard of details which modesty did not permit him to record (*quum multa improba reticuerim et quae ne dici quidem sine maximopudore possunt*); though he has veiled under decent terms (*praetextu verborum abhibito*) those which he did not dare to preserve in his narrative, addressed to the Emperor Constantine. Herodian and Xiphilinus, who alone have survived the loss of the original historians, furnish us with a few of these odious details which Lampridus (others say Spartianus) has not desired to reproduce: "One is astonished," we may repeat with Lampridus, "that such a monster had been made Emperor and that he had governed for nearly three years without anyone being found to deliver Roman society, though an assassin had not been lacking to Nero, to Vitellius, to Caligula and to other Princes of this sort." The reign of Heliogabalus is, truly, the last convulsion of paganism which, in dying, rolls despairingly in all the mud of the ancient world.

Heliogabalus, whose name originally was Avitus, took the one which designated his former rank as priest of the sun, and later he adopted that of Antoninus, because he pretended to be a descendant of that family to which the empire owed Antoninus the Pious and Marcus Aurelius, but which the execrable Commodus had already dishonored. According to Heliogabalus, his mother, Semiamire, who lived the life of a courtesan, and who had committed, at the court of the emperors, all sorts of turpitudes (*quum ipsa meretricio more vivens, in aulâ omnia turpia exerceret*), had had shameful relations with Antonius Caracalla, of which he was the fruit. His origin was, nevertheless, contested by those who had named him Varius, or Motley, on account of the numerous lovers who, at this period, shared the favors of his mother. Whatever may have been his birth, when Macrinus had had Caracalla assassinated, Heliogabalus feared that he would be compromised in the murder of the Emperor whom he gave out to be his father,

and he sought an inviolable asylum in the temple of the sun. It was from this temple that he came forth, the following year, to have himself proclaimed Emperor by his soldiers, who nicknamed him the Assyrian and Sardanapalus: "He wore very sumptuous habits," Herodian tells us, "covered with gold and purple, with bracelets, a necklace and a crown, in the manner of a tiara, enriched with pearls and precious stones. His dress was that of the priests of Phoenicia and had in it something of Macedonian luxury; he despised that of the Romans and the Greeks, which was only of wool, while he cared only for silk." He conceived the idea, in order to accustom the Romans to his barbaric luxury and to his effeminate attire, of having himself painted in the costume of a priest of the sun and of having this portrait sent to Rome before coming there himself. But it was his face, bearing the reflection of his manners, which inspired fright in the most debauched Romans: *Quis enim ferre posset principem per cuncta cava corporis libidinem recipientem, quum ne belluam quidem talem quisquam ferat?* Heliogabalus had not arrived through drunkenness with power at this excess of sensual depravation; he had been quite as corrupt and degraded in his sanctuary of the Phoenician god when the Empire came to him. We may assume, then, that in becoming Emperor, he had not become more perverse or more infamous, even though more cruel. What could be expected of a poor foolish wretch who possessed no notion of decency, and who believed that the principal thing in life was to be worthy and capable of satisfying the ignoble passions of as many persons as possible (*cum fructum vitæ præcipium existimans si dignus atque aptus libidini plurimorum videretur?*) We can understand why it was the Christians represented this Emperor as an incarnation of the devil.

At the first meeting of the Senate, he appeared there with his mother, whom more than one senator present recalled having known in the practice of her abject trade. Semiamire took her place beside the consuls and observed the formalities prescribed for the occasion. She was the only woman who sat, in her qual-

ity as *clarissima*, in the Roman Senate. Heliogabalus founded also, to please his mother, a little Senate (*senaculus*), composed of women who assembled certain days on the Quirinal to discuss sumptuary laws relating to women. They determined there what clothes they should wear in public, who should take precedence among them, and what persons should have their customary kisses, which of them should make use of suspended carriages, which of horse-chairs, which of asses, which of a chariot drawn by oxen or by mules and which of litters, and whether these litters should be furnished with skins or adorned with gold, ivory or silver; the form and ornamentation of the footgear to be worn by each class of women was also regulated by a decree of this "Senate." Semiamire appears to have reserved a supreme and exclusive authority over her sex; Heliogabalus, for his part, limited his role of Emperor to the men. During the winter, which he passed at Nicomedia, before establishing himself at Rome, Heliogabalus gave free reign to his infamous tastes, to such an extent that the soldiers who had elected him blushed for what they had done, upon seeing their Emperor mingling with vile gitons (*omnia sordide ageret, inireturque a viris et subaret*). He took no care to change his manner of life when he was in Rome. "All his occupations," says Lampridus, "were limited to choosing emissaries, who were charged with seeking out everywhere and bringing to his court men who must fulfill certain conditions favorable to his pleasures." Xiphilinus explains what these conditions were, which nature had dispensed so liberally to a limited number of privileged ones. Those who were adjudged worthy of being presented to the Emperor took part in certain indecent pantomimes, which the Emperor caused to be performed, and in which he always took the role of a fabled goddess. He loved, above all, to depict the loves of Venus, and in order to represent this character, he painted his face and rubbed his whole body with aromatic spices. Sometimes he would portray, under the disguise of Venus, the principal scene from the judgment of Paris; suddenly, his clothing would fall to his feet, and he would be

seen naked, one hand in front of his breast and the other over the virile organ, hiding it entirely, *posterioribus eminentibus in subactorem rejectis et oppositis*.

Heliogabalus chose, in the theatre and in the circus, companions for his debauches from among the most robust athletes and gladiators. It was there that he met those coachmen, Protogenas, Gordius and Hierocles, who took part in all his turpitudes; he had such a passion for Hierocles that he gave him, in public, the most hideous kisses (*Hieroclem vero sic amavit ut eidem oscularetur inguina*); he called that celebrating the *Florales*. He had caused to be constructed public baths in the palace, and he had no shame in bathing himself in the midst of the people, in order that he might better discover those particular qualities which he liked in men (*ut ex eo conditiones bene vasatorum hominum colligeret*). He ran about the streets and the banks of the Tiber seeking those whom he called *monobeles*, that is to say, complete men (*viriliores*). He had no honors to give except to fellows of this sort (*homines ad exercendas libidines bene vasatos et majoris peculii*). Heliogabalus thus elevated to the first dignities of the Empire certain personages who had no other title to these preferences except their enormous virile attribute (*commendatos sibi pudidilium enormitate membrorum*). At the feasts, he placed them by his side as close as possible and he was delighted to have contact with and to touch them (*eorumque attrectatione et tactu praecipue gaudebat*); it was from their hands he liked to receive the goblet from which he drank to their high deeds and his own.

Following the example of Nero and Commodus, he found an infinite pleasure in mingling incognito in all the acts of popular Prostitution: "Covered with a muleteer's bonnet in order not to be recognized," Lampridus tells us, "he visited in a single day, it was said, the courtezans of the Circus, of the Theatre, of the Amphitheatre and of all the quarters of Rome; if he did not commit debauchery with all of these women (*sine effectu libidinis*) he distributed, none the less, pieces of gold among them, saying:



‘Let no one know that Antonius has made you this gift!’ ” He felt a great sympathy and tenderness for these unfortunate instigators to public debauchery. One day, he assembled in a basilica of the city all the courtezans registered on the books of the aedile, and he presided himself over this strange assemblage, to which he admitted professional procuresses, all the known debauchees, children and the young who had been sold for lustful purposes (*lenones, exoletos, undique collectos et luxuriosissimos puerulos et juvenes*). He first presented himself in the costume of a high priest of the sun, in order better to impose on this infamous crowd, and he pronounced a circumstantial discourse, beginning with the word, Comrades (*commilitones*), a word which constantly recurred in his immodest address. Then he opened the discussion on a number of abstract questions pertaining to sensual pleasure and libertinism (*disputavitque de generibus schematum et voluptatum*). His immodest audience clapped their hands and gave vent to acclamations each time he spoke of some frightful imagination of debauchery. Drunken with his success, he left for a moment and reappeared clad as a woman, wearing the toga and the blond wig of a courtesan, revealing a misplaced neck and showing his naked leg, with the allurements, the gestures, the teasing manner and the words of a street prostitute. In this costume, he approached those from whom he, in his caprice, had borrowed his livery of a meretrix to prove to them that he knew their trade as well as they. Then, laying aside his false throat (*patillâ ejectâ*), he put on the airs and the habit of those children who are sold into prostitution (*habitu puerorum qui prostituuntur*), and he turned toward the debauchees to let them see that he was not less expert than they in their shameful art. Finally, he brought the session to a close by pronouncing a new harangue, more monstrous than the first, promising each of his assistants a gift of three pieces of gold, and asking their prayers that the gods might give him health, vigor and pleasure, according to his needs, until the time of his death.

This was not the only mark of special good will that he showed,



from love of their trade, to the courtezan class. He might often be seen redeeming with his denarii those who had been slaves in the power of the lenons, afterwards freeing them so they might continue, for their own profit, the odious traffic which they had learned to exercise. On this subject, the story is even told that, having redeemed thus, at the price of one hundred thousand sesterces (19,375 francs) a courtezan who was very beautiful and very famous, he did not touch her, but respected her as a virgin (*velut virginem coluisse*). When he traveled, he was followed by six hundred chariots, filled with lenons, splendidly equipped with meretrices and cinaedi (*causa vehiculorum erat lenonum, lenarum, meretricum, exoletorum, subactorum etiam bene vasatorum multitudo*). He always had women with him in the baths, and it was he himself who depilated them. He also made use for his beard of a depilatory paste (*psilothro*), and for this purpose he preferred one which had already been used in the depilation of his women. He also employed, in shaving, the same razor with which he had shaved the hair from the shameful parts of his gitons (*rasit et virilia subactoribus suis novacula manu suâ, qua postea barbam fecit*). "There is no one," says Xiphilinus, "who could recite or listen to a recital of the abominable indecencies which he committed or which he suffered on his body." Xiphilinus displays a repugnance about entering into those details which Dion Cassius had minutely collected, and which the Greek language covered with a sort of veil to render them more tolerable; but the original history of Dion Cassius has not preserved the reign of Heliogabalus, as though the pages devoted to this abominable period had been torn out by a modest hand. Lampridus also tells us that there had been collected, in the histories of this epoch, a great number of obscenities, which he thinks should be passed over in silence, because they are not worthy of remaining in the memory of men (*digna memoratu non sunt*): "He invented," he says, "many new methods of debauchery, and he surpassed the exploits of the ancient debauchees, for he knew all the practices of Nero, of Caligula and of Tiberius (*libidinum*

*genera quaedam invenit, ut spinthrias veterum malorum vinceret, et omnes apparatus Tiberii et Caligulae et Neronis norat).*”

We may, especially, regret the original text of Dion Cassius, in citing the following curious passage from the Abridgement of Xiphilinus, prudently weakened in the translation of President Cousin: “Heliogabalus went to the places of prostitution, chased out the courtezans and there plunged into the most infamous pleasures. Finally, he set aside for his incontinent purposes an apartment in his palace, at the door of which he sat, quite naked, in the manner of courtezans, drawing aside a curtain attached to gold rings and calling to passers-by in a soft and feminine voice. He had other persons assigned to the same employment, whom he made use of in seeking out those whose impudicity might give him pleasure. He took money from his accomplices and debauchees and gloried in a game as infamous as that. When he was with the companions of his lust, he boasted of having a greater number of lovers than they and of having amassed more silver; for it was true that he demanded money, indifferently, of all those to whom he prostituted himself. There was one among others, of very favorable build, whom he planned to have designated as Caesar.” President Cousin in this pale translation has avoided rendering the cynic naïveté of the Greek text, which did not have to consider the susceptibilities of the French mind.

If the sensual appetites of Heliogabalus were immoderate, his depraved imagination had all the more power and activity. Thus, what he incessantly sought, with an impatient curiosity, was new methods of defiling his eyes, his ears, and his soul by soiling also the modesty of others. The prodigious feasts which he gave to his mignons and to his gladiators were marked by goblets wrought in obscene forms, while amphorae and silver vases, heavily laden with erotic images (*schematibus libidinosissimis inquinata*), circulated among them. All this brazen display of silver was especially in evidence at the state suppers, which he gave on the occasion of the vintages, at which it was his amusement to defile the most respectable citizens and the most majestic old men. He

would ask, to embarrass them, if they had given proof in their youth of as much vigor as he had shown, and these questions were always put with an unheard-of impudence (*impudentissime*), for he never refrained from the most infamous expressions, and he often added to them gestures and signs which were still more infamous (*neque enim unquam verbis pepercit infamibus, quum et digitis impudicitiam ostendebat, nec ullus in conventu, et audiente populo, esset pudor*). And that was what he understood by celebrating the freedom of the vintages. He would brusquely ask an old man with a white beard and a solemn mien: "Are you faithful to the cult of Venus (*an promptus esset in Venerem*)?" If the old man blushed at this impertinent question: "He blushes!" he would cry, "that proves it (*salva res est*).” Silence and a blush were equivalent with him to a confession. He would then begin to talk about his own exploits, and if all the old men present dropped their eyes and blushed, he would appeal to his young accomplices, inviting them to reply, without circumlocution, to the question he had put; the latter would obey at once, and would even seek to improve upon the turpitude of their master, who rejoiced to hear them, and who would make ignoble remarks to lead them on. Flattery would frequently loosen the tongues of the old men, who, in their turn, would boast of having committed the same ignominies and of possessing husbands (*qui improba quaedam pati se dicerent, qui maritos se habere jactarent*). The Emperor, at these unexpected revelations, would exult with joy, not perceiving that the miserable old fellows were merely feigning vices which they did not possess in order to please and divert him.

This hermaphroditic Emperor wanted to have a number of legitimate wives and a number of husbands. He espoused, first, the widow of Pomponius Bassus, whom he had caused to be condemned to death, accusing him of having censored the private conduct of the Emperor. This woman, as beautiful as she was noble, as the granddaughter of Claudius Severus and of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Heliogabalus, who resorted to violence in

order to force her to submit to an odious union, soon abandoned her for other rivals: "He did not seek them, however, from any need which he had for them," says Xiphilinus, "but from the desire to imitate the debauches of his lovers." He afterwards married Cornelia Paula, in the hope, it was said, of the sooner becoming a father, "he who was not a man," Xiphilinus, as though to torture the commentators, adds. This marriage was celebrated by games and public fetes, but soon he repudiated his new spouse under the pretext that she had a blemish on her body. The true cause of this repudiation was another marriage which he wished to contract with more *éclat* than the preceding one. He had penetrated into the temple of Vesta and the sacred fire came near going out (*ignem perpetuum extinguere voluit*), while he profaned the sanctuary with an incest. He bore away the vestal, Aquila Severa, and married her insolently in the face of Heaven, saying that children born of a high priest of the sun and the priestess of Vesta would, undoubtedly, possess, something of the sacred and the divine. But Heliogabalus had no more children by this sacriligious marriage than he did by the other, and he soon became disgusted with this Vestal, whom he replaced by two or three women successively.

But in speaking of his marriages with men, we shall hardly adhere to the translation of Xiphilinus, which President Cousin has not dared reproduce with a scrupulous fidelity. Heliogabalus was married as a woman and had himself called *Madame* and *Empress*. "He worked at the loom, sometimes wore a net and rubbed his eyes with pomade. He shaved his chin and made a fete of it; took care that no hairs should appear upon it, so that he might be as like a woman as possible, and received in bed the senators who came to pay their respects to him. His husband was a slave, a native of Caria named Jerocles, a chariot driver." He had remarked Jerocles one day when, in falling from his chariot this lackey had revealed his curly hair and beardless chin; Jerocles had abundant blond hair, a skin smooth and white, fine features and a teasing glance, but he added to these feminine



attractions the body of a giant and an athletic form. Heliogabalus had him picked up, all covered with sweat and dust; then he installed him in his bedroom, after he had given him a bath, and the following day, he espoused him solemnly. "He had himself mistreated by his husband," Xiphilinus, or rather President Cousin, tells us, "the husband hurling insults at him and striking him with so great a violence that he sometimes bore on his face the marks of the blows which he had received. He did not love him with a feeble and passing ardor, but with a strong and constant passion, so that in place of being angry at the ill treatment which he received from him, he cherished him the more tenderly. He would have had him declared a Caesar if his mother and his grandmother had not been opposed to this act of immodest madness."

Jerocles, however, had a rival who encroached for a moment on the reputation which he enjoyed with the Emperor. This was Aurelius Zoticus, called the *Cook* because his father had been reared in the kitchen, where, as a child, he had turned the spit. Zoticus early had renounced the paternal trade in order to embrace the calling of a wrestler; with his fine carriage and physical vigor, he outdid all the athletes with whom he measured his strength in the games of the circus. Heliogabalus' purveyors recognized with admiration the singular merits of this robust champion and laid hold of him to bring him to Rome with triumphal pomp. From the praise which had been given of him to Heliogabalus, who burned to see him, he had been named the bedfellow (*cubicularius*) of the Emperor. The latter waited with a most indecent impatience while the new bedfellow was led into the palace to the light of torches. "As soon as that infamous Prince saw him," relates Xiphilinus, preserving the very terms of Dion Cassius' narrative, "he ran up to him with many blushes; and since Zoticus, in saluting him, had called him *lord* and *Emperor* according to custom, he replied by turning his head with a soft feminine air and casting lascivious looks at the other: 'Do not call me *lord*, since I am a *lady*!' He took him along to the

bath, and, having found that he was all that he had been represented to be, he supped between his arms as though he were his mistress." Jerocles, jealous of this rival, had the cleverness to see that the cupbearers poured him a frigid beverage which took away all his vigor and struck him with impotence. Heliogabalus, far from suspecting the plot of which Zoticus was the victim, looked upon him with as much wrath and contempt as he had shown him esteem and affection before. He came near giving him to the beasts, and Zoticus, in his disgrace, was only too happy at seeing himself merely deprived of his honors and driven out of the palace, out of Rome and out of Italy.

Heliogabalus, who played thus scandalously with the institution of marriage, from the point of view of both morality and the law, conceived the bizarre idea of wedding also the gods and the goddesses. He commenced by giving a wife to his Phoenician god, as though this god had need of a wife and child, as Xiphilinus remarks. The woman whom he had chosen was Pallas, and in order to accomplish this divine union, he had brought to his bedroom the Palladium, that venerated statue which the Romans looked upon as the safeguard of Rome, and which had not been removed from its place one single time, except when the temple of the goddess had caught fire. But the day after this strange and ridiculous profanation, which he had pushed as far as possible by putting the two statues in the same bed, he declared that so warlike a goddess was not suited to so pacific a god, and he caused to be brought to Rome for this god the Venus Urania, the divinity of the Carthaginians. Urania, who presided over the incubation of beings in the mysterious work of nature, and who personified the moon and the stars of the night, had, naturally, to be the bride of Heliogabalus, who was the god of the sun and of generation. The Emperor then celebrated their wedding with splendor, and he caused all the subjects of his Empire to contribute magnificent presents to the bridal couple. As for himself, his face painted and rouged, he danced in a silken tunic about the two statues, placed side by side in a bed of purple and bound to-

gether with linen bandalets. This incredible marriage of statues gave rise to great rejoicings at Rome and throughout Italy. Heliogabalus became identified, in a manner with the god whose name he bore; he made it a religious duty to submit to him and to sacrifice to him all the other gods, even that of the Christians; for he defiled the latter's temples with his impurities and he caused their images to be removed from the Pantheon of the sun: it was thus, on coming out of his monstrous debauches, that he fulfilled his duties of high priest. He did not refuse, however, to take part in the cult of other divinities, especially if he had a rôle to play in the mysteries of this cult. Thus, he might have been seen with dishevelled head, among the mutilated priests of Cybele; like them, he bound up his genital parts (*genitalia sibi devinxit*), and he did all that these impure fanatics were in the habit of doing. He also associated himself with the bizarre and obscene rites of Isis, of Priapus, of Flora and of Cotytto.

Nothing could present an exact and complete idea of these faery festivals, in which was combined all that lust, prodigality, gluttony and caprice could invent to satisfy his passions, his senses and his perverse instincts. He only lived, so to speak, to discover new pleasures (*exquirere novas voluptates*). Lamprius has enumerated a few of the marvelous follies he committed at table, where he sat always on flowers or precious essences, clad in purple or stuff of gold, laden down with precious stones, under the weight of which, he said, he sank with pleasure (*quum gravari se diceret onere voluttatis*), while his head was coiffed with a heavy oriental diadem. These fabulous repasts lasted for entire days and entire nights, with no other interruption than the intervals devoted to debauchery, as a rest for the stomach, which appeared to be as tireless as the senses. The guests were no longer men but wild beasts; they forced themselves to imitate their Emperor without hope of equaling him. The latter, heated with wines and perfumes, would cast off all his clothing, crown himself with rays of gold, suspend a quiver over his shoulders and, naked, his hair floating, his body rubbed with aromatic oils,

would mount upon a chariot, resplendent with precious stones and metals, and drawn by three or four women absolutely naked, who would pull him about the banquet hall (*Junxit et quaternas mulieres pulcherrimas et binas ad papillam, vel ternas et amplius, et sic vectatus, est: sed plerunque nudus quum illum nuda traherent.*) His generosity toward his table companions translated itself into gigantic or ridiculous presents, which were frequently distributed by lot; he laughed loudly when into the hands of an aged debauchee there fell a shell bearing the words, which amounted to an order: "Conduct yourself as a man before the Emperor;" he laughed much if, by one of these chances, which he loved to occasion, a decrepit old woman became the mistress of a beautiful young boy. Sometimes, hidden notes which the guests drew from an urn would command them to perform the twelve labors of Hercules or condemn them to ignoble and degrading services. This species of convivial lottery, in which he gave full reign to his imagination, sometimes brought exile, confiscation and even death to those who had not been favored by fortune. Happy the one who came out of it with only ten flies, ten eggs, ten spider webs to furnish or receive! The women, sometimes prostitutes gathered from the streets, who assisted at these orgies and who underwent all the vicissitudes of the occasion, were ordinarily the best provided for, and they would retire exhausted with lassitude, their faces discolored, their bodies bruised, their clothing in rags, but laden with booty. The most wretched and the most decayed who had been led by a good star to the table of the Emperor, might boast of having been, for a moment, almost an empress, for Heliogabalus took his pleasure everywhere, providing he did not have to deal twice with the same woman (*idem mulieres nunquam iteravit, praeter uxorem*). Finally, the courtezans of Rome had the right to come and prostitute themselves in the imperial lupanar, which remained open day and night in the interior of the palace (*lupanaria domi amicis, clientibus et servis exhibuit*). Courtezans and gitons commended themselves to his paternal solicitude; one day, he caused



the seventh part of the provisions of wheat which Trajan and Severus had accumulated in the public granaries, sufficient for seven years of famine, to be distributed to them.

This monster with a human face disgraced the Empire during a reign of four years, in which he committed all the extravagances, all the atrocities, all the debaucheries and all the abominations which could outrage nature. He glorified in imitating Apicius in his private life and, upon the throne, Nero, Otho and Vitellius. He was, however, only eighteen years old when he was killed by buffoons in the latrines in which he had hidden himself. The soldiers who had conspired to deliver Rome and the world from such an Emperor, rose also against his accomplices and caused them to undergo different tortures, disembowelling some and impaling others, so that, they said, their death might be like their life (*ut mors esset vitæ consentiens*). The *draggers* and the *impure*, as they nicknamed those who had dragged their bodies through the mud of the cities, could have had no equal in the history of the emperors, and after Heliogabalus, it seemed that humanity was taking a rest, under the beneficent influence of Alexander Severus, by opening its eyes to the light of evangelic morality. But before Christianity, which had invaded all sections of pagan society, had placed a bridle on sensual passion and constituted itself the official police of manners, we still see the succeeding emperors, like actors in a theatre, setting the people a contagious example by all manner of prostitution. Nearly all gave themselves to debauchery, nearly all let themselves go in the monstrous refinements of depravity. Galen, who lived only for his belly and his pleasures, (*natus abdomini et voluptatibus*), sometimes imitated Heliogabalus; he would invite a great number of women to his feasts, and then he would choose for himself the youngest and most beautiful, leaving the old and ugly to his guests. If the divine Claudius, as though to make the Romans forget the impure (*prodigiosum*), Galen was a chaste and philosophic monarch; if Aurelian repressed lust with sumptuary laws and rigorously punished adultery, even among slaves; if

the Emperor Tacitus forbade the establishment of evil houses in the interior of Rome, a prohibition which could not be enforced (*meritoria intra urbem stare vetuit, quod quidem diu tenere non potuit*); if he closed the public baths at night; if he forbade habits of filth and a profuse and effeminate luxury; if Probus was truly worthy of his name; Carinus, the predecessor of Diocletian, was, on the other hand, according to Flavius Vopiscus "the most debauched of men, the most brazen of adulterers and corrupters of youth, who pushed his infamy so far as even to prostitute himself (*homo omnium contaminatissimus, adulter, frequens corruptor juventutis, ipse quoque male usus genio sexus sui*)."

He had as praetorian prefect an old procurer named Matronian; for secretary, an *impurum*, with whom he always took his mid-day meal; while his friends were the most perverse of creatures. He soiled himself with the most infectious vices (*enormibus se vitiis et ingenti foeditate maculavit*), and he respected nothing (*moribus absolutus*). But Diocletian swept away all the vices which had made of the Emperor's palace a lupanar; and Diocletian, who was a Christian in the chastity of his manners and the morality of his laws, even though he cruelly persecuted the Christians, Diocletian the sage, the austere, the philosopher, still had the odious courage to make Prostitution one of the punishments which were inflicted on virgins and Christian maidens. It is, however, under Diocletian that the history of Roman Prostitution seems to come to an end.

This is the End of Volume II of the Original Text.



PART III

THE CHRISTIAN ERA

CHAPTER I

ALL the cults of paganism were, so to speak, but the symbols and the mysteries of Prostitution; Christianity, in proposing to do away with them and to replace them by a single cult, founded on human and divine morality, was under the necessity, first of all, of attacking Prostitution and reforming manners, before attempting any change in religious dogma. It is certain that the first apostles began their mission in a corrupt world, by preaching continence and chastity as the fundamental principles of the new doctrine. Jesus Christ, the truth is, had lived upon the earth chastely and like a virgin, although he had absolved the woman sinner and had converted the Magdalen, although he had saved, through repentance, the unfortunate victims of the demon of the flesh. It was, then, something unknown in pagan society, this teaching and practice of what might be called the sensual virtues, along with this celestial pardon, which always reserved the privilege of effacing the most inveterate stains. There was, thus, a strange contrast between the civil and moral laws of antiquity and this austere bridle imposed upon the carnal appetites, along with an indulgent pity for the errors of an earthly fragility. In the presence of Roman jurisprudence, which condemned the adulteress to death; despite the law of Moses, which was not less rigorous, and which was even more scrupulously observed among the Jews; in spite of all this, Jesus Christ dared to say to the Scribes and Pharisees, who had brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, and who wished to stone her in His presence: "Let the one who is without sin among you first cast a stone at her!" Then, having demanded of this criminal writhing at His feet who were her accusers and her judges, he said to her, in a voice gentle and consoling: "It is not I who condemn you! Go and sin no more



*(vade et jam amplius noli peccare).*”\* And yet, Jesus had instituted Christian marriage, quite different from the conjugal union authorized by Greek and Roman manners. The holiness of this indissoluble marriage, contracted in the presence of God, shines forth in those words which represent a whole legislative system, a whole morality and a whole philosophy: “A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh; thus, they shall be no longer two, but a single flesh. Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

The work of Christ had to be the moral regeneration of the world and the teaching to humanity of that respect which it owes itself; the religion which came from the Gospel was like a dike destined to restrain the irruptions of ancient debauchery, when those irruptions were threatening to engulf all the primitive notions of decency and virtue. It required not less than three centuries of struggle, of preaching and, above all, of example in order to overthrow the impure temples of Isis, of Ceres, of Venus, of Flora and of the other divinities of Prostitution. Christianity, in declaring war not only on the abuse of physical pleasures, but also on the pleasures themselves, was at great pains to destroy that paganism which protected, when it did not encourage, these pleasures. We may understand the immense efforts of the apostles and their holy successors in arriving at this prodigious result; namely, the establishment of the moral law and the religious repression of sensuality. Moses, in Deuteronomy, had proposed the principle: “There shall be no prostitute in Israel;” but this commandment had never been put into practice among the Israelites, who saw no wrong in having prostitutes themselves and, often, in furnishing them to foreign nations. Legal Prostitution, was, perhaps, more active and more widespread in Judea than in the rest of the Roman Empire. St. Paul, inspired by Christ, had, then, to do what Moses had not done, when he rose up to drive

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\*The same rule as in the previous volume is followed throughout this work with regard to Biblical quotations.

out of the nascent Church the evil spirit of Prostitution: "Do not live at the feasts and in drunkenness," he says in his Epistle to the Romans, "nor in immodesty, nor in debauchery (*cubilibus et impudiciis*), nor in contentions, nor in envy; but put on the garments of our Lord Jesus Christ, and do not seek to content your flesh with the pleasures of sensuality (*et carnis curam feceritis in desideriis*).” During the whole course of his apostleship, St. Paul pursued, with an inflexible rigor, the sins of the flesh, in which he believed that he was combating the every essence of paganism.

It is true that St. Paul knew well enough the capabilities of the pagans in the matter of incontinence, and he himself had lived long enough in pleasure to be able to appreciate its fatal influence. Thus, from the time of his first Epistle to the Romans, he addresses to the latter energetic reproaches for their abominable vices, which he calls the passions of ignominy (*passiones ignominiae*); he pictures them as wholly defiled with the most hideous lust (*masculi in masculos turpitudinem operantes*). It is to idolatry that he attributes this frightful demoralization which attached to the cults of the false gods. "They have altered the glory of the incorruptible God," he cries, with a chaste horror, "in order to give Him the face of corruptible man, of birds, of quadrupeds and of serpents. And so it is, God has given them over to the desires of their hearts, and to impurity, in such a manner that they give their bodies one to another, thereby dishonoring them (*propter quod tradidit illos Deus in desideria cordis eorum, in immunditiam, ut contumeliis afficiant corpora sua in semetipsis*).” The Romans were quite surprised that the apostle of the *King of the Jews* should take it upon himself to forbid what the most rigid philosophers had fully authorized, by their example as well as by their writings, with the exception of Seneca, who was looked upon as a Christian in disguise. But St. Paul had not come to Rome to traffic with his enemy, the sin of the flesh, which God, he said, had condemned, in that God had sent upon the earth His own Son in the form of sinful flesh (*in similitudinem carnis*

*peccati*) in order to take away the sin: "Love of the flesh is enmity toward God, for it does not pay homage to the law of God. And so it is, those who are in the flesh cannot be pleasing to God (*qui autem in carne sunt, Deo placere non possunt*)."

Those who listened to these preachings of St. Paul were not rich voluptuaries, living in luxury and laying tribute upon an entire world to satisfy their pleasures; they were poor plebeians who knew nothing of those monstrous refinements of Asiatic debauchery, brought into Rome with the trophies of vanquished peoples; they were boatmen of the Tiber, street corner beggars, grave-diggers of the Appian Way, fish sellers, herb merchants, fugitive slaves and unfortunate freedmen. But amid these dregs of the suburban population of the Eternal City, there was a young generation, composed of girls and boys who were being reared for the purpose of mercenary Prostitution. The Apostle addressed himself, particularly, to these sad victims of the corruption of their parents, their masters or their comrades; he did not endeavor to make them blush for their ignoble way of life, but he counselled them to renounce it in order to devote themselves to the service of the true God, who wanted only souls and not bodies! "You have lent your members to the service of impurity and iniquity, in order to commit iniquity, (*exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiae et iniquitati, ad iniquitatem*); henceforth, apply your members to the service of justice, in order to sanctify them." On a number of occasions, the proselytes of St. Paul, astonished at the severity of his precepts regarding carnal relations between the two sexes, demanded of him how they were to impose silence on their desires and their more or less imperious appetites; the virtuous Saint thereupon counselled prayer, fasting, meditation and penitence, as the most efficacious remedies to be employed against the seductions of the flesh; then, when it was found that these remedies were not enough for certain rebellious natures, he left to marriage the delicate task of dominating such rebellions: "If they are weak in preserving continence," he says to the Corinthians, "let them marry, for it is better to

marry than to burn (*quod si non se continent, nubant. Melius est enim nubere quam uri*)."

Christian marriage being the final bulwark which St. Paul opposed to the temptations of the flesh, he went on, then, to establish the true character of this marriage, which was the strongest dike that Christianity had reared against Prostitution. And yet, he did not appear a very warm partisan of marriage, when he remarked, enigmatically, to the Corinthians: "He who marries his daughter does well, but he who does not marry her does still better." It is true that, a little while after, he came back to this delicate question, *à propos* of women who prayed without having their heads covered: "The woman is the glory of the man!" he cried, bowing to sentiments which were all too human, "she is the glory of man, because the man does not come from the woman, but the woman from the man; and so, the man has not been created for the woman, but the woman for the man." St. Paul was not less inflexible with regard to every concession which might be made to the flesh: "The will of God," he says to the Thessalonians, "is that you should be pure and holy, and that you should abstain from fornication, and that each of you should seek to possess the vessel of his holy body in holiness and decency (*ut sciat unusquisque vestrum vas suum possidere in sanctificatione et honore*), and not in following the movements of concupiscence, as the pagans do, who do not know God, for God has not called us to be impure, but that we might be saints." He goes on, then, to enumerate the different degrees of impurity through which the body may pass in defiling itself: "The works of the flesh are fornication, impurity, impudicity, lust." Each of these sins has been defined by the Fathers of the Church and the theologians: fornication, *fornicatio*, is the relation of a free man with a free woman, that is, the carnal act accomplished out of marriage; impurity, *immunditia*, is the habit of unclean pleasures, the search for obscene joys; impudicity, *impudicitia*, is sodomy, or an act against nature; finally, lust, *luxuria*, is lechery, the unbridling of the sensual passions.



At Ephesus, as at Corinth, at Colossus as at Thessalonica, St. Paul attacks, pursues and overthrows paganism under the form of sensuality or lust; it is Prostitution which he combats unceasingly, because he finds it everywhere, even in the mysteries attached to the cults of the false gods. St. Paul had been a pagan; he knew, then, of his own accord, and was able to appreciate, the true character of that material religion which he desired to replace by a religion of the spirit; and that is why, in all his preachings, he poses as the reformer of manners in the name of Jesus Christ, who, according to the words of a Father of the Church, had lived chastely, although born of a woman, and who had never soiled the white robe of his virginity. That is why St. Paul says, literally, to the Thessalonians: "The will of God is your sanctification, in order that you may abstain from fornication (*ut abstinatis vos a fornicatione*) and that each of you may seek to possess the vessel of his body in holiness and in decency, without yielding to the movements of concupiscence, in the manner of the Gentiles who do not know God." He says the same to the Colossians: "Mortify, then, your members which are on the earth, that is to say, in the matter of fornication, impurity, lust and concupiscence." He says to the Galatians: "He who sows to the flesh shall reap of the flesh corruption, and he who sows to the spirit shall reap of the spirit life eternal." If he wrote to the Ephesians, it was to adjure them not to live as the other nations, who, having lost all remorse and all sentiment of modesty, had abandoned themselves to dissolution, in order to plunge with an insatiable avidity into all sorts of impurity. He dared to preach chastity and continence amid the corruptions of voluptuous Corinth and in the presence of those of an evil way of life, of thieves and debauchees, who had come to hear him out of curiosity: "Do you not know," he cried, "that he who joins himself with a prostitute is of the same body with her? 'For those who were two are now but one flesh,' says the Scripture. But he who dwells in the Lord is of the same spirit with Him. Flee fornication. Whatever other sin a man commits, it is a sin outside the body; but he who com-

mits fornication sins against his own body (*an nescitis quoniam qui adhaeret meretrici unum corpus efficitur? Erunt enim, inquit, duo in carne una! . . . Fugite fornicationem. Onne peccatum quodcumque fecerit homo, extra corpus est; qui autem fornicatur, in corpus suum peccat*)."

All the apostles were, moreover, in accord with St. Paul in condemning paganism on the score of Prostitution; in this they were merely conforming to the sentiment of the Prophets and the letter of the Bible; but the evangelists had been less energetic in their pronouncements against the sins of the flesh. St. John even had placed in two separate categories spiritual and bodily acts, in such a manner that they were not to be confused in a single judgment: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit, spirit." This was, perhaps, a charitable excuse, offered to carnal sinners who desired purification through the waters of baptism. However this may have been, the doctrine of St. Paul, more austere and less equivocal, was generally adopted by the first Fathers of the Church and by the councils: "Hate as you would a soiled vestment," St. Jude had said, "all that which is stained with the corruption of the flesh." From this horror of incontinence came, inevitably, Christian celibacy.

Philosophy, it is true, had sometimes taught temperance\* to the pagans; but this philosophic temperance found its *raison d'être* only in purely human considerations; it was but relative and accidental, for it was Cicero's thesis that nature must be obeyed, and that her laws were as lofty as those of a god. Aristotle, for his part, proposed no other rule in the matter of sensual pleasures than the knowledge of one's own strength, that is to say, the instincts of nature. And so it was, the philosophers did not recommend temperance, except from the point of view of health and physical economy; they often abandoned themselves to their desires, for the reason that they regarded the pleasures of the

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\**sophrosyne* (the Latin *temperantia*). The other three cardinal virtues of the stoics were: *sophia* (*sapientia*), wisdom; *dikaiosyne* (*justitia*), justice; and *andreia* (*fortitudo*), courage.

senses as wholly conformable to nature (*hos physeos ergon*), according to the evidence of St. Nilus, a disciple of St. John Chrysostom. Modesty was only a virtue in the hymns of poets; and this virtue, even with the ancients, did not possess the attributes which one might expect of its name. The goddess, Modesty, who had temples and altars throughout the Roman Empire, did not represent, according to the most learned antiquaries, virginity or even continence; she represented, rather, conscience, the intimate voice of the soul, the shame which comes from doing evil and the love of good. This Modesty of the Romans had for image a seated woman, sometimes veiled, holding her right hand to her face and pointing to the latter with her raised index finger, in order to express the fact that the sign of modesty lay in a lowered glance and a blushing brow. Seneca is, perhaps, the only pagan philosopher who understood and taught moral chastity, which the Christians imposed with a pious abnegation of natural instincts: "Among them," reports Origen, "the simplest and least enlightened persons, and even those of lowest condition, show often, in their manners and in their conduct, a gravity, a purity, a chastity and an innocence which are wholly admirable, while the great philosophers, who are looked upon as sages, are so far from these same virtues as to defile themselves openly with the most infamous and the most abominable crimes."

Religious chastity, nevertheless, was not absolutely disdained by the pagans. We have already said that the men and the women abstained from all sexual relations when they went to offer a sacrifice to the gods. Lovers themselves then withdrew from their mistresses, while the latter avoided a carnal contact which would have forced them to seek purification before the ceremony.\* The venereal act was not looked upon as reprehensible in any case, and it was never an offense to Divinity, which, on the contrary, encouraged it in a general sense; but in presenting an offering which should be agreeable to the god who was the object of it, the only thing to do was to deprive oneself of the

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\*Cf. the Catholic confession and communion.

pleasure which was esteemed above all others. There was in this a sacrifice of the most delicate sort, since the one who made it was at the same time the victim. This continence as an act of pure devotion was, then, frequently to be met with in the private life of the Romans, who practiced their religion with some scruples; upon the eve of certain fetes, at the approach of certain mysteries, the conjugal couch no longer held the husband and wife, who felt impelled to keep a distance between them and to impose an absolute reserve upon the pleasures of marriage. Ovid, in his *Fasti* (Book II,) shows us Hercules, Hercules himself, conforming to this usage, when he prepares with Omphale to sacrifice to Bacchus: They slept in two separate, although neighboring beds (*et positis iusta succubuerunt toris*),\* and they did nothing which might interfere with the decency of the sacrifice. The priests who sacrificed daily undoubtedly were not required to be chaste all the time; and yet, we may infer, from a number of passages in Latin authors, that a sacrifice was not looked upon as good and propitious except when the one who offered it had pure hands. "Chastity is pleasing to the gods," says the poet Tibullus (*casta placent superis*), who suggests that neophytes do not approach the altar except with immaculate garments (*pura cum veste*) and that they do not sprinkle the sacred water except with chaste hands. "Far from the altars," cries Tibullus, "he who has given a part of his night to Venus! (*Discedite ab aris, queis tulit hesterna gaudia nocte Venus*)."<sup>†</sup> As to the vow of virginity, the pagan religion authorized or prescribed it under different circumstances; but this species of physical virginity possessed no analogy with that moral virginity which the Christians understood and practiced. Vestals, for example, had to preserve intact their virginal flower, under pain of being interred alive and given over to the most horrible torture; but the necessity of remaining virgins ceased for them at the end of puberty, and they might then feed the fires of Venus as they before had fed the flames of Vesta.

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\*Twin beds.

<sup>†</sup>This is the Virgilian "*Procul o procul, absint profani.*" Cf. the Horatian "*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.*"



The youngest, moreover, were by no means constrained to spiritual chastity or an innocence of the heart: they assisted at the public games, at the gladiatorial combats, at the mimes, at the *atellanae* and at the dances of the theater; they did not shut their eyes to voluptuous images nor their ears to obscene words and immodest songs. Their virginity did not extend above the belt,\* as one Father of the Church puts it.

"Is there a comparison," remarks St. Ambrose (*De Virginitate*, Book I), "between our Christian virgins and the virgins of Vesta and the priestesses of Pallas? But what sort of virginity is that which is made to consist not in purity and holiness of manners, but in years, and which is not perpetual, but merely prescribed up to a certain age? This pretended integrity is soon changed into libertinism when one is resolved to lose it at a more advanced age (*petulantior est talis integritas, cujus corruptela seniori servatur aetati*). Those who prescribe a certain period for virginity thereby teach their virgins not to preserve in such a state. What a religion, which prescribes modesty for the young and immodesty for the aged! . . . No, these Vestals are not chaste, since they are so only by constraint, nor decent, since one may buy them, or rather, hire them for silver, for the name of modesty may not be given to one who every day yields herself to the immodest glances of a whole people, corrupted with debauchery (*nec pudor ille est qui intemperantium oculorum quotidiano expositus convitio, flagitiosis aspectibus verberatur*)!" The Fathers of the Church were tireless in comparing Christian virgins with the Vestals, or pagan virgins, in order better to bring out the profound difference which existed between the two. St. Ambrose comes back to this incessantly in his chapter on Vestals, in order to detract from the merit of their interested and imperfect virginity; he does not go as far as Minutius Felix, who looks upon this virginity as highly suspect, and who dares say that all the Vestals

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\*"ne dépassait donc pas la ceinture" is LaCroix' phrase. The original is not quoted.

would have been buried alive, if they had been properly punished for their offenses (*impunitatem fecerit non castitas tutior, sed impudicitia feticior*): "Let them, then, cease praising those Vestals," cries St. Ambrose, "for chastity that is sold for a price in silver, and which is not due to a love of virtue, is not chastity; that is not virginity which, as on an auction block, is bought or hired for a time!" As to that purely physical virginity which the pagans demanded of their Vestals, it appeared so difficult to preserve and so dangerous to promise that it was not easy to find a girl who would willingly consent to vow herself to the sorry state of a Vestal. "You have barely seven Vestals," cried St. Ambrose to the Emperor Valentinian, "and moreover they were very young when they were devoted to Vesta. Behold, that is all the virgins which idolatry may claim for its service! Seven unhappy ones who have permitted themselves to be seduced by habits embroidered in purple, by sumptuous litters, by a numerous cortège of slaves, by special privileges, enormous revenues and, above all, by the hope of not dying virgins despite their vows!"

Christian celibacy had become, especially with women, one of the most powerful means of propagating the evangelical religion; the doctrine formulated by St. Paul regarding continence had been accepted with fanaticism by the young feminine converts, who found a glory in overcoming the desires of the flesh; for the ardors of the senses were appeased, if not extinguished, by abstinence, sobriety, prayer and solitude. Since celibacy, which the Roman law proscribed as a shameful thing, was looked upon by the new adepts of Jesus Christ as, at once, an honor and a victory, a sort of emulation was to be witnessed among the virgins who vowed themselves to a mystic marriage with the Son of God. Of a sudden, ancient Prostitution halted and recoiled before the triumph of virginity. "Let the Gentiles," said St. Ambrose, "lift the eyes of the body and, at the same time, those of the soul; for they may behold that illustrious multitude, that venerable assemblage, that entire race of virgins who honor the Church (*plebem pudorius populum integritatis, concilium virginitatis*): They do

not wear any bandelets upon the head, but a modest veil such as only is commended by a chaste custom; they do not permit themselves those artifices of the toilet which serve the shameful traffic of beauty (*lenocinia pulchritudinis*)!" Prudentius, in his book against Symmachus, also exalted Christian virginity: "The finest privilege of our virgins," he said, "lies in modesty, in the face covered with a sacred veil, in a respectable and decent life, sheltered from profane glances, in a frugal repast and in a spirit that is always sober and chaste!" It must be confessed, however, that what produced this contest, this emulation in the matter of virginity, was not so much a contentment with the virginal state as the pleasure of possessing a superiority over other women and causing oneself to be remarked for a virtue accompanied by a sort of pomp. Thus, the virgins occupied a special place in the ceremonies of religion. They wore also a distinctive garb, which marked them out in public. A strange coincidence! this attribute was the mitre\* which the courtezans of Rome, especially the Syrians, had taken for their ensign and which was a dishonor to the woman brazen or imprudent enough to adopt such a headgear. The mitre of virgins, of which St. Optatus speaks (*Contra Donat.*, Book VI) differed, undoubtedly, in height, in form and in color from the mitre of courtezans; it did not permit, however, long and flowing locks, nor a blond peruke, nor a coiffure curled and gleaming with powder of gold, for a Christian virgin proclaimed her vocation by cutting off her hair; in addition, this rehabilitated mitre was hidden in a veil, violet, brown or black in color, which covered the face and fell down over the shoulders, like the *flammeum* of Vestals.

During the three first centuries necessary to the establishment of Catholic dogma there was a striking warfare between morality and Prostitution, while the doctors of the Church incessantly opposed to the sensual philosophy of the pagans the chaste and

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\*This tradition of the mitre was still very much alive in the sixteenth century. See Aretino's play, *La Cortigiana*: "That Rome of yours is a brazen hussy (*spacciata*); she wears the mitre and is not ashamed." (See my English translation of the *Works of Aretinoe*, Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926.)

austere experience of the Christian life. The holy Fathers desired to make themselves masters of their bodies, in order better to obtain control of their souls. The women were at first enthusiastic for virginity; following their example the men submitted to continence. "What more beautiful thing could be imagined than the sublime virtue of chastity?" said St. Bernard, taking his inspiration, in the eleventh century, from the high thoughts of the primitive Church, "it makes clean a body rescued from a corrupt and filthy mass; of an enemy it makes a friend, and of a man an angel!" In opposition to the religious debauches of paganism the new cult surrounded itself with simple and modest ceremonies. These mysteries were celebrated in the midst of a holy contemplation, without tumult, without clamor, without scandal. Modesty and decency presided always at the Christian rites. The two sexes were separated in the churches, they did not see each other when they were in the Holy Presence; they did not meet each other even in going to pray before the altar, and they avoided thus the perils of a familiar relationship which might have given room to the weaknesses of the flesh. The priests in their exhortations found no texts they liked better than those words of St. Paul in his *Epistle* to the Romans: "Do not give your members to sin in order to make use of the arms of iniquity!" This praise, this glorification of chastity served as a point of departure for all their teachings. "Continence," said St. Basil, "is the ruin of sin, the despoiling of the vicious affections, the mortification of the passions and even of the natural desires of our bodies, the augmentation of merit, the work of God, the school of virtue and the possession of all blessings." (*Interrog.*, XVII ff.)

While the Christians were priding themselves upon their moral superiority and the purity of their manners, the pagans were employing against them the weapons of calumny and pretending that their religion was but a monstrous collection of infamous Prostitutions. The Christians, as a matter of fact, constantly threatened or persecuted, only assembled in secret, far from the regard of their enemies, in the depths of woods, in caverns, and, above all,



in the shadows of the catacombs. No profane eye was permitted in these hidden sanctuaries, and nothing was known of their rites, of their practices or of their dogmas except what came to light in the untruthful accounts of a few rare apostates. Thus, the opinion of the people, encouraged by the fanatic priests of the false gods, was for a long time hostile to these pious catechumens who practiced the most austere virtues and who preferred death to the least bodily stain. The report had been widely spread that these brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ professed a religion so frightful that they did not dare to confess its principles and its rites. There was a tale of unknown horrors committed in their nocturnal assemblages, and rumor went so far as to say that their terrible lusts respected neither age, sex, nor the ties of blood and family. Christianity, according to some, was but a Judaism in disguise; according to others, it was an execrable frenzy of atheism and debauchery, which had endeavored a number of times to find its way into the religion of the Roman Empire, and which was made up of the most odious inventions of human perversity. It was in this manner that ancient Prostitution sought to absolve itself by attributing to Christianity its own excesses, which, for two centuries, threatened pagan society before attaining the light of day and unveiling itself in all its gleaming purity.

The philosophic Platonists were the first to make the acquaintance of and to justify the evangelic doctrines; from the year 170 of the new era, Athenagoras had refuted victoriously the unworthy calumnies which attributed to the Christians all sorts of incests and infamies; in his *Apology* for the Christian religion, addressed to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus he proclaimed the chastity of the Christians according to sex, age and degree of consanguinity: "We regard the ones as children," he says, "the others as our brothers and our sisters, and we honor the old ones as our fathers and our mothers. Thus, we take great care to preserve the purity of those whom we look upon as our relatives. When we come to give the kiss of peace, it is with

great caution, as befitting an act of religion; hence, if it were soiled by an impure thought, it would deprive us of eternal life. Each of us, in taking a wife, thinks only of having children, and imitates the laborer, who, having once consigned his grain to the earth, waits for the harvest in patience." In another passage of his *Apology*, Athenagoras returns with still more force to this subject of chastity, a chastity which characterized all the Christians amid the ordinary and perduring incontinence of the Gentiles: "The Christians," he says, "abstain not merely from adulteries, but also from relations with public women; and the fear which they have of falling into the abyss restrains them from the thought of the least pleasure that is not respectable and causes them carefully to avoid all lascivious looks which may transmit the image of some impurity. They put the ban on frequent visiting, divertissements, disrespectable discourse, long conversations, futile contacts and immoderate laughter. They deny themselves the most innocent liberties, and they never show those parts of the body which decency keeps covered. Their garments hide them out of doors and their modesty within doors, in such a manner that in the house they preserve a shame in the presence of their relatives and servants; in the bath, they are ashamed for the sake of women and, in particular, for their own sakes." All the Fathers of the nascent Church protest with the same energy against the perfidious and calumniating imputations which tended to bring the Christians into disrepute: "The love of chastity has so much force with them," said St. Justin in his *Dialogues*, "that many of them are to be found who pass their entire life without any carnal alliance and who remain virgins at the age of sixty years, and this continence is not due to temperament or country."

St. Cyprian, St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nicaea, St. Basil, all the Greek and Latin Fathers, have given us an edifying picture of Christian manners, which were as pure as those of the pagans were depraved. St. Cyprian devotes his *Treatise on Modesty* to the exaltation of this virtue of the Christians: "They know," he says, "that the carnal pleasures begin with the

hope of meeting with permanent joys and end in pure illusions which cause us to blush for ourselves. They hurl us with fury into every species of brutality; they lead us to all sorts of crime, by seducing us into the horror and abomination of those monstrous alliances which pass over from the sex to which nature has consigned us to our own sex and descend to that of animals, by inventing a thousand voluptuous abominations over which the imagination cannot pause without blushing." St. Gregory of Nicaea calls to witness the pagans themselves, in order to establish the glorious chastity of the Christians: "They are not content with being chaste in their bodies, to the mortification of all carnal pleasures; they purify themselves also in spirit, seeking that true virginity which must be their defense against the adultery of sin." It was through fear of defiling their souls that they avoided every shameful spectacle, every indecent image; they never assisted at theatrical performances, which St. Cyprian describes as *schools of impurity*; they banished from their frugal tables those diabolic viands which excited the senses and led to the quest of gross satisfactions; they did not permit themselves the use of perfumes, which nourished soft and lascivious thoughts and led to sensuality; they permitted neither songs, nor dances, nor laughter, nor drunkenness, nor gluttony at their banquets, where the presence of the Holy Spirit was always in evidence.

St. Clement of Alexandria (*Pedag.*, Book II) enters into the most intimate details on the subject of this chastity, which was the pride of the faithful and the shame of the Gentiles. After having established, in his *Stromates* (Book II), the radical difference which existed between marriages of one sort and the other, by saying that the pagans sought only the satisfaction of their brutal desires in the marriage couch, whereas the Christians demanded only that this union should lead them to one with Jesus Christ, goes on to say: "The Christians would have women please their husbands by the purity of their manners and not by their beauty; they would also have husbands not make use of their wives as prostitutes, from whom are to be sought only sen-

sual corruptions.”—“For,” he adds in his *Pedagogus*, “nature has not given us marriage except as something which is to be used and not abused, in a proportion useful to the health of the body.” This same Father of the Church presents us with a curious picture of the decency of the Christian marriage: “The married pair,” he says, “take modesty to their couch, from fear that, if they were to violate in darkness the precepts of that modesty which they have learned by the light of day, they would resemble Penelope, who undid at night the warp she had woven during the day. This modesty being a proof that they know how to repress their desires, even when those desires have a right to freedom, it is at the same time a proof that, in giving themselves one to another, they are wholly chaste. One does not see in their couch all those accompaniments of sin which pleasure alone has invented; for if Jesus Christ has permitted them to marry, he has not permitted them to be voluptuaries.” Elsewhere St. Clement defines the chastity of Christian marriage, compared with which the marriage of pagans was but a Prostitution in the form of concubinage, or an immoral traffic: “The only object of a union,” he says (*Pedag.*, Book II, Chapter 10), “is to have children in order to make of them good folks. It is against reason and against law to seek in marriage nothing but pleasure; but one should not, therefore, abstain from it from fear of having children. Nature equally forbids, in infancy and in old age, an immodest relation between the two sexes; those to whom marriage permits these carnal relations must be continually attentive to the presence of God, and must respect their bodies, which are his members, by abstaining from all glances, all contacts which are illicit and unclean. . . .”

The conduct observed by married couples had naturally led some doctors of the Church, such as Origen, to suppress the feminine sex in the other life as futile and dangerous. Origen, who had experienced in his own person his doctrine of the retrenchment of the sexes, would have it that the masculine sex alone was to be resurrected. Other Fathers, in order better to assure the



continence of their flocks, were of the opinion that the elect possessed no sex, but that the damned preserved theirs along with their miserable passions. The majority of the doctors, on the contrary, based their belief upon the words of the *Apocalypse* and so believed and taught that in Heaven the Saints would be married, would produce children and would enjoy all the pleasures of the body. Tertullian, Lactantius, Irenaeus, Justin and Methodius pronounced in favor of this celestial and eternal marriage. But the Church, through the voice of its councils, was forced to revise this hazardous opinion and to declare that, if the two sexes persisted in Heaven, there would be no marriage, much less anything in the way of terrestrial pleasures and procreation of children. St. Augustine in this respect, in his *City of God*, Book II, Chapter 17: "God shall take away whatever is vicious among the elect, but he will permit sex to remain, which is not an evil since God is its creator. Those members which shall no longer possess any passions and which shall no longer serve their ancient purposes, shall be clad in a new beauty." The casuists did not permit themselves to stop here, for they imagined that the resurrection would repair a lack of virginal integrity in bodies which had lost their virginity upon the earth.

Chastity, that virtue of which the Christians arrogated the monopoly, was, then, the constant preoccupation of the latter and the principal sign of their belief; they guarded it as a precious gift of the divine Saviour, and they made of it a provocative armor against pagan sensualism, which found itself incapable of imitating Christianity in this regard. We may understand that the founders of Catholicism, aware of the active power which this chastity exercised over the masses as over individuals, had called to its aid all the rigors of ecclesiastical penalty, so greatly interested was the young Church in preaching manners and in teaching by example. Hence the severity of the Christian code respecting carnal infractions which the human law did not touch. For simple fornication, St. Gregory of Nicaea desired the penitence should be nine years, divided into three periods, the forni-

cators to be for three years *excluded* from prayer, to be for three years merely *auditors*, and for three years *prostrate ones*. St. Basil was more indulgent; he was content with a penitence of four years for fornication, and with knowing that one year had been passed in each state of penitence. On the other hand, he did not spare adultery, incest, sodomy or bestiality, which he punished with a penitence of fifteen years, the guilty one remaining for four years a *weeper*, for five years an *auditor*, for five years a *prostrate one*, and for two years an *assistant*. On the other hand, the adultery of a married man with an unmarried woman was equivalent to a single fornication. Polygamy, although looked upon as a state of bestiality and one unworthy of man, carried with it a penitence of but four years, one year as a *weeper* and three years as a *prostrate one*. The concubinage of persons devoted to God was not looked upon as other than a case of fornication, provided these illicit relations were broken. A girl who had prostituted herself with the consent of her relatives or her masters did three years of penitence; she who had only yielded to violence incurred no penalty and was not soiled in the sight of God or man. As to the deacon guilty of fornication, he must go back to the ranks of the simple laity and labor in mortifying his sinful flesh.

This legislation of the primitive Church is sufficient proof of the inestimable value which the Christians placed on the preservation of their physical and mental purity; the pagans, however, were maliciously stubborn in the face of a virtue which their adversaries incessantly upheld as a defiance to the disorders and impurities of the pagan religion. They applied themselves to finding out how far this virtue might go, and they endeavored to give it a stain by forcing upon it the outrages of violence and debauchery. But this sort of punishment possessed no more power than others over the holy resignation of virgins and martyrs. These victims made to God an offering of their virginity and un- of fornication. The Church assisted then in this agony of per-

secution, and her consoling voice encouraged them to mount to Heaven by the bitter path of Prostitution: "Virginity," St. Augustine cried to them (*Contra Jul.*, Book IV), "is in the body; modesty is in the spirit: the latter remains when virginity has been taken away from the body." . . . "It is not violence which corrupts the bodies of holy women," added St. Jerome. . . . "A virgin," said St. Ambrose, "may be prostituted and still not defiled." . . . "Moreover, whatever may be done with the body and in the body by violence," replied St. Augustine, "all that does not defile the person who has suffered this violence without being able to resist it; for if purity perished in this manner, it would be no longer a virtue of the spirit, but a quality of the body, like beauty, health and other perishable blessings."

A priest named Victorian had written to St. Augustine in order to announce dolorously the horrible violences which the barbarians were causing Christian virgins to endure; the Saint replied to him (*Ep.* 122) that if these virgins endured such violences without consenting and without submitting to them, they were not guilty in the sight of God. "This shall rather be to them," he said, "an honorable and a glorious wound than a shameful corruption. For chastity, which is of the soul, possesses so great a spiritual force that it remains inviolable, and as a result, the purity of the body itself is unable to receive any soil, even though the corruptors have dared to vanquish and violate the members of the physical body." St. Basil expresses, almost in the same terms, an analogous doctrine in order to tranquilize the minds of virgins threatened with this most redoubtable of martyrdoms: "If there are any," he says, "who have endured violence, their souls have not consented to it, and they shall not fail to present to their divine Bridegroom those souls wholly pure and free from corruption and with even more honor and glory." This was at once an encouragement and a reparation for the poor virgins given to the punishment of prostitution. The idea of this cruel punishment certainly had been inspired in the persecutors by the singular admiration which the Christians manifested in

their virgins, and at the same time, by the striking pride which these latter evidenced in their state of immaculate purity. That is why, during the persecutions, so many Christian virgins were outraged by their executioners, who were but applying ancient Roman law, by virtue of which a virgin could not be put to death. "As to virgins," says Suetonius, in his *Life of Tiberius*, "since an ancient custom prevented them from being strangled, the hangmen first violated and then strangled them (*immaturatae puellae, quia more tradito nefas esset virgines strangulari, vitatae prius a carnifice, dein strangulatae*)." The rape of Christian virgins was, then, in the beginning but a preliminary to capital punishment, conforming to the custom of the Roman law; later, this rape became the principal part of the punishment itself, and the virgins did not decline the responsibilities of their virginal state in the presence of their pagan judges, who took an odious pleasure in wounding them in what they held most dear; but their virginity was a sacrifice which they offered to God in exchange for the crown of martyrdom.

We must listen to the chant of victory which St. Cyprian addresses to these divine martyrs devoured by the monster of pagan Prostitution: "Virgins," he says, "are like flowers in the garden of the Church, the master work of grace, and the ornament of nature, a labor perfect and incorruptible, worthy of all praise and all honor, the image of God, corresponding to the sanctity of our Lord, and the most illustrious part of the flock of Jesus Christ." Paganism hoped to destroy the germ of the new religion by attacking the very principle of virginity, but the virgins were stronger than their executioners.





## CHAPTER II.

**I**T IS not difficult to understand the motives and the lofty foresight which commended chastity above all the Christian virtues. This virtue, undoubtedly, had been prescribed by the law of Moses, and we find at every step in the Holy Scriptures a condemnation of excesses of the flesh. Solomon, who must have had seven hundred concubines in his old age, did not spare those guilty excesses into which he allowed himself to be drawn: "He who is an adulterer loses his soul through the folly of his heart," he says in his Proverbs (Chapter VI), "he shall sink deeper and deeper into turpitude and ignominy, and his opprobrium shall never be effaced." St. Paul and the apostles were, then, but following the Mosaic doctrine by imposing on the Christians carnal abstinence and a virginal purity. But there was also a necessity which lent its aid to the counsels of religion, in the interest of that morality which the Gospel had dictated: the communal life of catechumens of the two sexes exposed them to temptations, to ardors and to daily perils which called for a powerful preservative to save them from disorders which were almost inevitable. These disorders, reminiscent of the most shameful mysteries of paganism, would have confounded with the latter in the eyes of the pagans the divine religion of Jesus Christ, and the cult of the true God would have possessed no advantage in the struggle with the debasing cults of Venus, of Bacchus, of Cybele and of Isis; for in these different idolatries, the celebration of mysteries defiled the temples and sacred groves only at certain periods of the year, whereas the occult ceremonies of the Catholic faith took place all the time, every day, or rather every night, under the name of *agapes*.\*

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\*An *agape* was a Christian love-feast.

In these agapes, in these fraternal repasts at which the word of the Lord nourished the soul by mortifying the body, the two sexes were united and concupiscence would have been awakened in hearts which were the coldest and most chaste, if the law of the new cult had not placed a salutary bridle on the instincts of nature and the attractions of vice. That is why continence was the first virtue demanded of Christians in order to guarantee and favor all the others. If this virtue had not been incessantly preached and profoundly rooted in the beliefs of all, the agapes would have served only to propagate Prostitution. Nothing can give a complete idea of the exaltation of the faithful, who aspired only to martyrdom, and who willingly suffered martyrdom in their persons, in their desires and in their passions, before abandoning themselves entirely in the public place. This exaltation, turned to debauchery, as only too often happened when heresies arose, would have led to monstrous excesses and discredited Christianity by consigning to universal contempt the apostles and their proselytes. We may imagine also the dangers which the brothers and the sisters, assembled for prayer and penitence, constantly incurred in the midst of this contemplative existence. The women were wholly veiled and covered with vestments which gave no hint of any bodily form. These vestments, of gross wool and of a uniform color, white, gray or black, did not woo curious glances by means of worldly ornaments; and the sense of smell was not awakened by the soft solicitations of perfumes. These women, whose buskins did not even appear from under the folds of their long robes, resembled, in the shadows, immobile statues or mourners at a funeral. The men, for their part, were not clad with less decency, with this difference, that they did not wear veils, but great hats with large hoods under which their faces, pale and emaciated, had the aspect of skulls. But even this was not enough to prevent nature from speaking more loudly than the will; this rebellious and fiery nature had to be restrained by the authority of precept and example.

And so, men and women might remain with impunity, for whole days and nights, mingled pell-mell and face to face with one another, without any guilty acts and even without evil thoughts; they breathed the same air, they slept side by side in the catacombs and in the midst of the woods; they slept and woke only to pray. What is more, when the persecutions had forced the Christians to hide themselves and to live together in the depths of solitudes, the dogma of continence had already been firmly established among the sons and the brides of Jesus Christ, since it had conquered the most violent revolts of the flesh, despite the continual menace of discouragement and idleness. There was no longer any sex, so to speak, in this pious mélange of male and female saints, who inhabited together those subterranean retreats where they often made their cradles, and which were for them an inviolable tomb. It is not, then, surprising that the pagans, ignorant of the chastity which prevailed in this secret way of life, should have imagined what they themselves would have done, with their own license of manners and abetted by the sensuality of their religion; they were unable to persuade themselves that the senses could accept such a slavery; they did not suspect what might be the empire of prayer and what the fanaticism of religious devotion might accomplish. Hence, the odious calumnies which they circulated against the Christians, with whom they confounded those impure heresiarchs whom the rising Church repelled with horror.

It was in the catacombs, in those vast excavations where Rome had found the material for her temples and her edifices, it was in those somber subterranean vaults, which served as a cemetery for slaves and the poorer population of the Eternal City, it was here that Christ found his first adorers; for his Gospel was addressed, first of all, to the suffering and the unfortunate. The gravediggers (*fossores*), who hollowed out the sepulchres and who never saw the sun, were the first to accept with confidence a religion which abased the proud and elevated the humble; they enriched themselves thus with all the joys of that Paradise which



the Saviour promised them, and they felt themselves rehabilitated, they who were pursued by the horror and contempt of the living, whom they had the sorrowful privilege of interring. A similar rehabilitation awaited the abject classes which had need of recovering their self-esteem under the brand which public opinion had inflicted upon them. Christianity effaced every original blot, by means of repentance and baptism; it created in the old man a new man; it rendered pure the one who had been impure up to then; it placed an aureole of pardon on the brows of the stigmatized. There is, thus, a natural explanation of the regenerating and consoling effect it had on those degraded beings devoted to the service of Prostitution.

These miserable ones, who up to that time had not been even conscious of their degradation, were suddenly struck with shame and sorrow; their eyes were opened to the light of evangelic morality, and they beheld with horror the depths of that abyss of vice into which they had hurled themselves. Some were converted and abjured their scandalous life; others continued it with tears and prayers, submitting to it as to an odious tyranny and offering to Heaven the holocaust of their sufferings. The religion of Christ was rapidly propagated among souls filled with remorse and bitterness, and the vilest prostitute lifted up her face and looked to Heaven. The preachings of the apostles and their disciples took place, first of all, at the street corners, at the gates of cities, in the public places and the suburbs, wherever an idle and curious crowd lent complacent ears to the orator. The street porters, sailors, gladiators and fugitive slaves, the vilest populace, in a word, pressed about the man of God who preached continence and the mortification of the flesh. The prostitutes were the most ardent in listening to this beneficent word, which appeased the emotion of their hearts, and which gave them the strength to walk toward God. These unfortunate victims of debauchery were less horror-struck with themselves when they believed that they had communicated with the Redeemer, and frequently they would renounce their frightful trade in order to de-

vote themselves to the mission which Jesus had given to virgins and martyrs. Such was, certainly, the imperious motive which led, in the first centuries, to the founding of the institution of Christian celibacy. Jesus had absolved Mary Magdalen for the reason that she had loved much; following the example of Jesus, the holy confessors showed themselves indulgent to the women who had lived in impurity, so long as they were pagans, and who, upon becoming Christians, entered upon the glorious life of penitence.

There are many legends of courtezans touched by the hand of the Lord, who attached themselves to his footsteps in order to win their own salvation by effacing the turpitude of their past life. All these poor women were animated by the Holy Spirit, like the three Marys who had left everything in order to follow Jesus Christ. The more they had been soiled by sin, the more they forced themselves to seek purification in the expiatory flames of faith. Many among them, and some of the most perverted ones, became saints and won the crown of martyrdom. The number of saints of this sort is so considerable that the Jesuit Father Theophile Raynaud has composed a special martyrology, after the history of the Egyptian Mary, who was their model and their patroness. It is no project of ours to write the gilded legion of all these beatified meretrices, and we shall not contest the place they occupy, rightly or wrongly, among the blessed of Heaven; we shall merely borrow certain passages from the writings of the ancient hagiographers, in order to make evident the influence of Christianity on pagan Prostitution, and to establish this singular fact, namely, that the prostitutes had the signal honor of being the first to abjure the cult of the false gods and those emblems, always more or less indecent, of human sensuality.

Mary the Egyptian, who lived during the reign of Claudius, and who had hidden herself in the desert in order to do penance after her conversion, told her own story to the Abbot Zosimus, whom she had met when she was completely nude, her body burned and black with the sun. "I was born in Egypt," she tells

him, covering her nudity with a mantle which Zosimus had given her. "In my twelfth year, I went to Alexandria, where for seventeen years I submitted myself to public depravation and did not refuse myself to any man. When the people of this country wished to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to adore the true Cross, I prayed the mariners who conveyed them there to take me with them. When they demanded of me the price of the passage, I said to them: 'Brothers, I have nothing to give, but take my body in payment of my passage.' They took me thus and disposed of my body by way of payment. We arrived at Jerusalem together, and having presented myself with the others at the gates of the church, in order to adore the true Cross, I was suddenly repelled by an invisible force; I returned a number of times in vain, and always I felt that I was being held back while the others entered without difficulty. Then I took counsel with myself and reflected that my numerous and filthy sins had been the cause of this repulsion. I began to sigh profoundly, to shed bitter tears and to chastise my body with my hands." She makes a vow of chastity and places herself under the protection of the Virgin Mary, who permits her to enter the church and adore the true Cross. After which, she crossed the Jordan and shut herself in the desert, where she remained forty-seven years without seeing any man, living on three loaves of bread which she had brought with her. "During the seventeen first years of my solitary life," she says, "I had to suffer the temptations of the flesh; but by the grace of God, I have vanquished them all. . . ." Such were the examples which the Christian confessor offered the women of evil life who came in a crowd to hear him. The story which we have borrowed from Jacques de Voragine, the great legendary of the middle ages, is more decent than the one contained in the *Acts* of the Saint, paraphrased and commentated, with little restraint, by her historian, Theophile Renaud. This Saint was the ordinary patron of courtezans, and the abandonment which she made of her body to the boatmen was represented on the windows of churches, notably on those of Sainte-Marie-

de-la-Jussienne, a chapel situated formerly in the street which still preserves this name in Paris.

Another courtesan, who did not possess the reputation of Mary the Egyptian, also figures, among others of her kind, in the *Life of the Fathers*, where she makes an honorable amend for her sins. It is possible, however, that this Saint was never anything more than a personification of the penitent debauchee and a touching emblem of the purification of a body that had been defiled. Her name was Thais and she dwelt in a city of Egypt which tradition does not name; her beauty was such that many foolish ones sold all they possessed in order to purchase her favors and found themselves, upon leaving her couch, reduced to an extreme poverty; her lovers often fell into jealous quarrels, and her door-sill was bespattered with blood, we are told by Jacques de Voragine. The Abbott Paphnucius conceived the idea of converting her. He put on a secular habit, took a piece of money and offered it to her as a remuneration for the sin which he appeared to be soliciting of her. She accepted the money, saying: "Go to my room!" and when Paphnucius had entered this room and she had invited him to enter the bed, which was all covered with rich stuffs, he said to her: "Can we not go to a more secret place?" She led him, in succession, into a number of other rooms, and he always objected that he feared being seen: "Here is a room where no one enters," she remarked to him sorrowfully, "but if it is God that you fear, there is no place which is hidden from His regard." The old man, astonished at this language, demanded of her whether she knew that there was a God of reward and vengeance. She replied that she knew it. "Then since you know it," cried Paphnucius with severity, "how does it come that you have been the ruin of so many souls? Yes, sinner, there is a God, and you shall render account to him not merely for your own soul, but also for all those whom you have led into sin." At these words, Thais fell at the feet of Paphnucius, shedding tears of contrition. "My father," she said, "I hope to be able to obtain through prayer a remission for my sins; I pray you to give me three



hours in which to prepare myself to follow you; I will do then all that you command." The Abbot, having indicated the place where he would wait for her, left this house of impurity. Thais collected all that she had gained as a result of her sins, sumptuous vestments, rich jewels, splendid furniture, and made a joyful blaze of it all in the public place in the presence of all the people. "Come all," she cried, "come, you who have sinned with me, and see how I burn all that I have received from you!" These objects amounted in value to forty pounds in gold. When all had been consumed, she rejoined Paphnucus, who led her into a monastery of virgins, and there he shut her up in a little cell, the door of which he closed and locked, leaving but a narrow window through which each day slender rations of bread and a little water were passed in to the recluse. When the old man took his departure from her, Thais cried to him: "My father, where would you have me spill the water which nature expels from my body?" . . . "In your cell, as you deserve," he replied harshly. She demanded then how she should adore God. "You are not worthy of pronouncing the name of God," he replied, "nor of raising your hands toward heaven, for your lips are full of iniquity and your hands are laden with defilement. Prostrate yourself toward the East and repeat often these words: 'You who are my Creator, have pity on me!'" This harsh penance lasted for three years, after which Thais, delivered by the Abbot Paphnucus, in spite of herself, returned to the world; but she did not survive more than three days after her sins had been remitted, and she died in peace like a virgin.

Saint Ephraim was less happy in the conversion of another woman of evil life who desired to lead him into sin with her. In order to be rid of her importunities, the Saint said to her: "Follow me!" She followed him; but in place of leading her to a secluded place, favorable to an illicit enterprise, he led this woman into the middle of a street where there was a great throng of people; then, turning toward her: "Stop here," he said to her bruskiy, "so that I may have relations with you!" . . . "I can

not do that," she replied, blushing, "there are too many people here!" . . . "If you blush in the presence of men," replied Saint Ephraim with indignation, "should you not blush even more in the presence of your Creator, who discovers things hidden in the depths of darkness?" The courtesan, ashamed and confused, fled with lowered head, but she did not retire to a monastery and did not give to the flames the product of her infamous trade. Often the Fathers of the Church did not fear to commit themselves with these creatures in the attempt to bring them back to God by forcing them to blush for their sins. The *Lives of the Fathers* are full of these adventures, which bear witness to the constancy and the charity of these venerable confessors. Two solitaires, who betook themselves to the city of Aegaea in Tharsus, suffered so much from heat along the way that they were forced to halt at an inn, despite the repugnance they felt at entering an evil place. There were in this inn a number of young debauchees and a prostitute. The latter, inspired by the Devil, approached one of the two solitaires and invited him to commit an act of incontinence. The solitary repelled her with disgust and turned aside, praying God to pardon her. The brazen one, however, returned to the charge, with a thousand teasing ways, and besought the poor solitary not to refuse what she asked of him; she pronounced then the name of the Magdalen, who, she said, had found grace with Jesus. "That is true!" replied the solitary, "but when Jesus had spoken to this sinner, she ceased to be a courtesan." . . . "And I also!" cried this woman, obeying a sudden inspiration of the Holy Spirit. She separated, upon the spot, from her companions in debauchery, and piously followed the two solitaires, who led her to a monastery of women, where she endured all sorts of macerations under the name of Mary. Her companions never reproached her with her former state, and all soiled as she had been before her miraculous conversion, she regarded herself, from then on, as one of the most faithful brides of Christ.

A passage from the *Life of Saint Simeon Stylites*, who passed more than forty years on the crest of a column, where he had established his anchorite's cell (he died in the year 460), shows us how the courtezans of all countries came to feed their eyes on the moving spectacle of his austerities and their ears on the encouragements of the Divine Word. Saint Simeon, from the top of his column, converted a multitude of vicious or perverse men, who came running from all sides to listen to his preachings. The meretrices, whom the renown of the Saint attracted in a throng, no sooner saw him praying and scattering blessings from his column than they would at once renounce their way of life, their pompous habits, their perfumes and their pleasures, in order to enter a monastery, where they became saints, through the tears they shed and the detestation they acquired for their former sins; *Quid porro de meretricibus dicam, quae, ex diversis procul terris, ad servi Dei septum profectae, postquam illum conspexere, patriam suam deseruere, et severiorem ascetarum disciplinam in monasterio professae, sanctorum honorem commeruerunt, posteaquam, Domino largiente, praeteritorum criminum chirographa suis lacrymis* (*Acta Sanctorum*, t. II, p. 344). We may infer from this curious passage that the courtezans, touched by Grace, were forced to make a general confession and a detailed inventory of their sins, those sins which were always under their eyes during their long period of penitence, in order that they might not forget their ancient misdeeds but might weep for them eternally. The penitent courtezans might become catechumens as soon as they had abjured their state of prostitution; thus, in the *Life of Saint Pelagia* (Arnaud d'Andilly, volume I, page 572), we see this famous comedienne, who had not yet renounced the world, assisting at a religious service in the church at Antioch, which she had never entered before; and yet, she had given a terrible scandal to the bishop and his suffragans, seated at the door of the Church of St. Julian, when she passed near them, gleaming with precious stones, with pearls and gold, which shone upon her slippers, perfumed with essences; as the haughty beauty

passed, the holy bishop and his assessors beat a retreat, with lowered eyes and groaning souls, in order not to see that diabolic face, those shoulders, that breast, those naked arms, which the temptress presented for their chaste regard.

This Saint Pelagia is not the one who was called Porphyra, in her life as a courtesan, and who lived at Tyre two or three centuries later. One day, this latter perceived in the street two solitaries who had come to seek the poor and the sick. Porphyra suddenly received an inspiration of Divine Grace and ran to meet these good fathers, addressing the eldest of them. "Save me, my father," she cried, upon the impulse of her heart, "save me as Jesus Christ saved the sinner!" The solitary to whom she addressed these words, raised his eyes toward her and contemplated her with a gentle and melancholy air. "Follow me!" he said to her. She started to follow him at a distance, with humility and respect; but he went to her, took her hand and led her publicly through the city. When they were outside, they entered a church and Porphyra found there a newborn child whom she adopted. The solitary and the courtesan went away with the child, but there was a suspicion that they were responsible for the birth of this infant, a scandal which was put an end to by the solitary, who carried live coals under his robe in order to prove his innocence. Porphyra had taken the name of Pelagia and had shut herself in a monastery. Her example made such an impression on the courtesans of Tyre that they desired to imitate her, and many among them consecrated themselves to God in order to put on the robes of innocence and become the brides of Christ.

The first Saint Pelagia died at Antioch during the persecution of Licinius in the year 308; she hurled herself from a roof in order to escape the soldiers who were coming to get her and who had threatened her vow of chastity. During the same persecution, there were courtesans who suffered martyrdom, among them Theodote, Afra and their followers, all of whom followed the trade of prostitution. The savant, Ruinart, who places under this date the acts of Saint Theodote, makes this observation, which



he sought to support by a few authorities: "One does not see but one courtesan admitted to the communion of the faithful and received into the church before the period of the persecution of Licinius, but it can not be denied that Theodote had made a traffic of her body (*quaestum corpore fecisse*).” The martyrdom of Saint Afra was even more remarkable than that of Theodote, who was insulted by being condemned to resume her shameful trade. Afra appeared before Judge Gaius, who received her smilingly. "As I understand, you are a meretrix," he said to her. "Sacrifice to the gods! You should do it all the more willingly, for the reason that a meretrix has nothing to gain from the God of the Christians." Afra kept silent and in a low voice commended herself to Christ. "Sacrifice," replied the judge, "sacrifice, so that the gods may grant that you be loved by your lovers as they have loved you up to now! Sacrifice, so that your lovers may bring you much silver!"

Afra blushed at this allusion to her past life. "I shall never again accept that horrible silver," she cried with a gesture of disgust, "for the silver which I have gained in this manner I have cast far from me, since it was not gained with a good conscience (*de bonâ conscientia*). I have prayed one of my poor brothers, who did not want to accept it, to purify it by accepting it and by praying for me. If I have rid myself of property so ill-acquired, which weighed upon my heart, how can I think of acquiring more in the same manner?" . . . "Christ does not find you worthy," replied Gaius. "It is then without reason that you called him your God; he does not recognize you as His, for a woman who is a meretrix can not call herself a Christian." . . . "As a matter of fact, I do not deserve the name of Christian! And yet, the mercy of God, which judges not my merits but my faith, is quite willing to receive me into Paradise." Judge Gaius then pronounced his judgment: "We command that the courtesan Afra (*publicam meretricem*), who has confessed herself a Christian and who has refused to sacrifice to the gods, be burned alive!"

Afra walked to her punishment, while her two followers, Eunomia and Eutropia, who had been baptized like her by the Bishop Narcissus, remained veiled and silent, on the banks of the river, hoping that they might share the martyrdom of their mistress, even as they had shared her sin (*simulque fuerant in peccato*). Afra, in mounting the pyre, made this prayer, which was adopted in the Middle Ages as that of repentant prostitutes:

“All powerful Lord God Jesus Christ, who hast called not the just but sinners to repentance; Jesus, whose promises are true and manifest, since Thou hast deigned to say that when a sinner has been converted from his iniquities, at that very hour Thou wilt not remember any more the sins of the penitent; receive then at this hour the expiation of my death (*Accipe in hac hora passionis meae poenitentiam*)!”

A courtesan martyred in the name of Christ always won over a throng of victims from Prostitution and always gave birth to new martyrs.



### CHAPTER III.

THE Christians were so proud of their chastity, they attached so great a price to it and so feared to lose or alter this treasure that their persecutors took a malign pleasure in tormenting them in their possession of a blessing of which they would not have thought of depriving them if the Christians had not, in a manner, hurled thus a defiance at pagan philosophy and religion. Thus is to be explained that strange punishment which consisted in giving a Christian woman, whether virgin or not, to the infamous brutalities of public Prostitution. Such a punishment as this is too often evident in the Acts of the saints to leave any doubt as to its nature as an emblem of the excesses of idolatry. The hagiographers, on this point, enter upon the most singular details, and Saint Ambrose, in Book III of his *Treatise on Virgins*, where he recounts complacently the martyrdom of Saint Theodora, gives us to understand that this heavy punishment was almost always reserved to virgins who refused to sacrifice to the gods. Moreover, as we have already said, this was, perhaps, but the application of the old Roman law which forbade putting a virgin to death, and which abandoned the latter to a species of degradation which the executioner had the right of forcing upon his victim before executing sentence. But, in addition to this ancient custom, there was certainly, also, the intention to dishonor the Christian woman in her own eyes as in those of her co-religionists. The sacrifice to the gods, imposed on every woman accused of being a Christian, was, for the latter, but a preliminary to Prostitution, for the majority of the gods and goddesses appeared to have been invented in order to deify the sensual passions and to make a permanent appeal to debauchery: "The Gentiles," says St. Clement of Alexandria, "renounce all senti-



ment of shame and modesty, preserving in their houses pictures in which the gods are represented amid the most infamous transports of pleasure; they adorn their sleeping chambers with these indecent paintings and look upon the most monstrous incontinence with a sort of piety. From your beds your eyes look upon the image of Venus and the bird which flies towards Leda; the more immodest a picture is the more excellent it appears; you have a design engraved, and you take for a subject the debaucheries of Jupiter! Such are the models which you find in your luxuries, such the infamous ideas which you have of your gods; such the criminal doctrines which you teach and which you practice! . . . You commit fornication and adultery with your eyes before you commit them in reality;\* you commit an outrage against the nature of man, and you annihilate the Divinity in you by your unworthy actions!" The Christians, thus, would have believed that they were committing a fornication or an adultery in sacrificing to the gods of paganism, in approaching the latter's altars, by casting on those altars a grain of incense or by lifting their eyes toward those statutes which frequently flaunted modesty and taught sin, by their attributes and by their mute provocations. Virgins turned away their gaze or veiled their eyes in horror in the presence of these impure divinities, and the judge, then, as though to prepare them for a sacrifice to Venus, to Isis, to Bacchus or to some other idol, would send them for a rude apprenticeship in a house of prostitution.

It was, then, with a profound despair that the holy women underwent these horrible violences; they would demand of their Divine Bridegroom that He call them to Himself before their cherished purity should fall a prey to the impious ones; they would abase themselves in prayer and in contrition in order not to be witnesses of their own degradation; they would have preferred a thousand deaths, a thousand tortures, to the loss of their innocence. It would appear that the exposition of Christians to

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\*Cf. the Tolstoyan doctrine.

the mercy of debauchees was not put into practice before the terrible persecution of Marcus Aurelius, for Tertullian, in his *Apologetic*, speaks of this species of punishment as a recent invention, due to a refinement of cruelty (*exquisitior crudelitas*). "Finally, in condemning a virgin to a *lenon* rather than to a *lion*," he says, with a bitter play of words, "you confess that an outrage to modesty is, to Christians, more atrocious than all the tortures and all the different kinds of death (*Proxime ad lenonem damnando christianam, potiusquam ad leonem, confessi estis labem pudicitiae apud anos atrociolem omni poena et omni morte reputari*).” But Jesus Christ frequently took pity on these chaste brides, and sometimes he would accord them the grace of dying safe and sound, sometimes he would cause his Angels to descend to them in order to protect and exhort them, sometimes he would strike with impotence the most formidable executioners, or he would suddenly make of the latter Christians and confessors. "When the implacable persecution was on in full force," St. Basil tells us (*De Vera Virginitate*, Section 52), "virgins, chosen on account of their faith in their Divine Bridegroom, having been given as playthings to the gaze of the impious, would preserve the purity of their bodies, and that only by the Grace of Jesus Christ, who desired to show that all the efforts of the impious were powerless to soil the flesh of his virgins, and that their bodies would remain inviolable under his safeguard, as the result of a miracle." It is, perhaps, necessary in the Latin text of this passage to correct a word and to read *liminibus* in place of *luminibus*, which would give us sense more conformable to the customs of the persecutors, in the following phrase: "*Electae virginies propter Sponsi fidem, ad illudendum impiis luminibus traditae, corporibus inviolatae perdurarunt*." It is probable that St. Basil was speaking of the dicterions or the lupanars, which ordinarily received Christian virgins who had been condemned to Prostitution, but the Latin translator has replaced the Greek word with a circumlocution, *impiis liminibus*, which is descriptive enough of those evil places, while a copyist, on the other

hand, has changed the sense of the phrase, a sense which we propose to reëstablish without departing from our subject.

We have not the necessary space to relate here all the martyrdoms which began or ended with an enforced Prostitution. It would take an entire book for this subject, making use, from this point of view alone, of the immense collection of the Bollandists and studying the *Acts* of the saints who were more or less persecuted in the matter of their virginity or their chastity. We shall merely group together a few related facts in order to make it evident in what manner and to what end paganism attacked Christian modesty. We shall be able to understand, thus, with what a pure love the holy women gave themselves to Jesus Christ, by looking upon the gracious portrait which St. Augustine has drawn of Christian charity in his *Confessions*: "Chastity presents herself to me with a face full of majesty and gentleness, adding to a gracious smile caresses that are unaffected, in order to give me the hardiness to approach her; she extends, to receive and embrace me, her charitable arms, between which I see so many persons who well may serve as examples to me. There are a great number of young lads and young girls, of men and women of every age, of venerable widows and of virgins who have almost reached old age. And this excellent virtue is not a sterile but a fecund one in these good souls, since it is the mother of so many celestial desires, which it conceives of You, my God, Who art her veritable and her Holy Bridegroom!" This chastity was as jealous of its own preservation in old age as in infancy, and persecution took no account of age when it destined a victim for the outrages of Prostitution. St. Agnes was not thirteen years old, and the seven virgins of Ancyra could not remember ever having been young.

These seven virgins, although aged from seventy to eighty years each, were condemned, as Christians, to be given over to the debauchees of Ancyra. These debauchees, however, did not have the courage to make them the instruments of a cruel persecution; a single one among them dared attempt the adventure,

but the Spirit of God came between him and the holy virgins. The prefect of Ancyra, furious at perceiving that his judgment was not being executed, condemned them out of malice, on account of their invincible virginity, to the service of the temple of Diana. By a singular circumstance, which the one who repeats the legend does not justify, they were sent utterly naked to wash the statue of the goddess in a sacred lake near the city, which the cortége had to pass through, and in which their nudity was a surprise to the spectators. It was in the waters of the lake that they found a refuge against the curious glances of the crowd. This strange martyrdom dated from the fourth century, according to Nilus, who has preserved for us the incredible tale. The other saints, who were exposed to pagan brutality, almost all belonged to the same epoch. Theodora, Irene, Agnes and Euphemia were tested in the same fashion in the horrible persecution which was ordered by Diocletian in the year 303, a persecution which lasted until the year 311, and which made more martyrs than all those that had gone before. Never had more dolorous punishments been conceived for Christian chastity. Thus, in the Thebaid, women were fastened by a foot and reared in the air by machines to remain suspended there, heels over head and entirely naked. The genius of Prostitution appeared to have inspired judges and executioners with a prodigious lust for infamous tortures.

The poet, Aurelius Prudentius, who wrote more than sixty years after the horrors of this persecution, undoubtedly preserved memories of it when he painted the agony of a virgin devoted to the outrages of pagan impudicity. If the virgin did not lean her head against the altar of Minerva and did not demand grace of that goddess, she was covered with insults until she was led away to the lupanar. All the ardent youth of the city would hurl themselves upon the unfortunate one and dispute the right to insult her (*novum ludibriorum mancipium petat*). She was ordered to halt at the corner of every street; but the virgin would flee all the more quickly, turning her head and hiding her face, pursued by an impatient throng; she feared that some libertine



might lift a hand to her and offer a cruel insult to her sex (*ne petulantius quisquam verendum conspiceret locum*): and under the threat of this peril she would hasten to find shelter for her virginity in a lupanar, as though she would there find safety, and as though the lupanar could be only chaste and inviolable for her. Nothing is more touching than this picture of Christian modesty.

St. Agnes, in fact, did not lose her virginity by being led into a Roman lupanar. She belonged to one of the first families of that city, and although barely thirteen years old, she had already been sought in marriage by a number of young patricians. Her great beauty did not turn her from the austere life which she had embraced. She was denounced as a Christian to the prefect, Symphronius, by the very son of this prefect, who was one of the suitors whom she had disdained; she proclaimed haughtily her belief and declared that she had consecrated her virginity to Jesus Christ. "You must choose between two courses," the judge told her. "Either you must sacrifice to Vesta with the Vestals or you must prostitute yourself with the courtezans in a lupanar of soldiers, where you will receive no aid from the Christians who have seduced you (*aut cum meretricibus scortaberis in contubernio lupanari*)."

Agnes replied to Symphronius by defying him. The latter, irritated by her audacity, ordered that she be despoiled of her vestments and led away to a lupanar, preceded by a herald with a trumpet crying: "Agnes, a sacriligious virgin, having blasphemed the gods, is delivered to public Prostitution (*scortum lupanaribus datam*)."

The order of the prefect was carried out. But Agnes' clothes had barely been removed when her hair fell down and formed a veil about her body. An Angel walked at her side and cast a divine splendor about her. She entered the lupanar, resplendent with light, but her modesty was assured by the gleaming whiteness of the robe which covered her from head to foot. The debauchees who were waiting for her in this evil place, did not dare approach her, but looked on her in terror, until, finally, they fell at her feet, imploring her pardon.

The son of the prefect came running with his companions in pleasure to assure himself of the fine prey which had been promised him; but as soon as he stretched a hand toward Agnes, he fell dead, as though struck by a thunderbolt. Such is the recital of St. Ambrose in his *Epistles* (Book IV, Epistle 34); but the *Acts* of the Saint, published by Ruinart, add to this recital many details which are important for the history of Prostitution. According to these *Acts*, as soon as the Saint had arrived at the lupanar, she was clad in a chemise of transparent gauze of the sort the daughters of joy wore in the interior of these evil places in order the better to arouse lust by permitting a glimpse or a view of that which would inflame it. The populace at once invaded the place, and each endeavored to enforce his right as being the first comer; but this ardent immodesty was at once extinguished and vanquished; the libertines remained immobile, trembling, undecided, without strength and without will; they blushed with shame and retired without having touched the Saint, who looked upon them calmly. The lupanar was only emptied to be filled again; but the miracle was repeated, and the brazen ones found themselves forbidden even before they had attempted a violence which the young Agnes did not seem to fear. All fled in terror and with respect, and none dared again enter the den of Prostitution. One only presented himself once more: the rumor spread that this was the son of Symphronius himself; he did not doubt the success of his shameful enterprise; he hurled himself, alone, behind the curtain which formed the entrance to the lupanar; he advanced impetuously toward Agnes. He stretched out his arms to seize her, but fell dead at her feet. In the meanwhile, his friends were awaiting him at the door, curious and anxious to know if the wolf had succeeded in ravishing the lamb of Christ, according to the words of the legend. When he did not reappear and no sound was heard from Agnes' cell, someone dared to enter; at sight of the dead, he was troubled and invoked the pity of the Saint and was converted. None, thereafter, was hardy enough to attempt to execute the order of Symphronius, before whom Agnes again

was led, fortified in her virginity. Agnes consented to resurrect the dead man, whom she had sacrificed in the defense of her modesty, and the resurrected thought no more of taking Christian virgins; but this miraculous resurrection was attributed to magic invocations, and Agnes, condemned to be burned alive, took with her in the flames of her pyre, the flower of her virginity. The learned editor of this legend mentions the tradition which placed under the vaults of the Agonal Circus where the public games took place, this lupanar in which the virginity of Agnes had won a victory over her impure antagonists.

This punishment of the lupanar is frequently repeated in the *Acts of the Saints*, but always under different circumstances, which seem to indicate a detailed variation of a single theme. It is not probable that the same facts would recur so often with so much similarity. The most celebrated of all the martyrdoms of this sort was that of St. Theodora, who undoubtedly owes the celebrity of her name to a bad tragedy by Pierre Corneille, rather than to the legend paraphrased by St. Ambrose and to her *Acts*, published by Ruinart. She was a noble lady of Alexandria. The judge cited her to appear before him and ordered her to sacrifice to the gods. "According to the orders of the Emperor," he told her, "you virgins who refuse to offer incense to the gods are to be exposed in evil places. But I feel a pity for your birth and for your beauty." . . . "You may do what pleases you," replied Theodora. "My will shall have no part in the violences which you perpetrate." She was slapped in the face, by order of the judge, who felt that he had to subdue this rebellious one. "Despite your illustrious rank," he said to her, "you force me to insult you in front of the people, who are awaiting your decision. I will give you three days to reflect; after that time, if you refuse to sacrifice, I shall expose you in a lupanar so that those of your own sex may see your dishonor and mend their ways." The three days having passed, Theodora remained as firm as ever in her resolution. "Theodora," the judge said to her, "since you persist in your refusal to sacrifice, I order that you be led to

a lupanar. We shall see if that Christ of yours will deliver you." . . . "God, Who up to this time has preserved me without blemish," Theodora replied gently, "God knows what will happen; He is powerful enough to protect me against those who would do me injury." She was led to a house of Prostitution; in entering it, she addressed a fervent prayer to her Celestial Bridegroom. The people surrounded the house, awaiting the outcome of a martyrdom which was not a new thing for them, and which ordinarily ended with a sacrifice of the victim's virginity. This time, there were more spectators than actors. No one offered to insult the Christian woman. Finally, a soldier parted the crowd and entered the place of punishment. Theodora shuddered at the sound of his steps; she drew about her, with trembling hands, the few vestments which had been left her, and which did not wholly hide what she was endeavoring to veil. This soldier was a Christian who had taken a disguise in order to come to her and save her; he besought her to change garments with him, and finally succeeded in persuading her, by painting for her a hideous picture of the fate which awaited her in this villainous house. Theodora, disguised as a soldier, covering her face with her cape and her two hands, was enabled, happily, to leave this den of vice without being forced to respond to the questions which besieged her and the bursts of laughter that pursued her steps. An hour later, the Christian, led before the judge, was condemned to be decapitated for having assisted in the deliverance of Theodora. The latter reappeared and disputed with her liberator the crown of martyrdom. "It is I who have been condemned," Didymus told her. . . . "You have tried hard enough to save my honor," Theodora replied, "but I shall not permit you to save my life; for it was infamy that I fled and not death." They were decapitated together and Theodora died a virgin.

Palladius, in his *Life of the Fathers (Vita Patrum, Cap. CXLVIII: De foemina nobilissima quae fuit semper virgo)*, reports a very similar fact, which must have taken place a century before, but the hero of which he does not name, although he bor-



rows his tale from "an ancient book," as he says, "written by Hippolytus, who was a friend of the apostles." A noble and virtuous young woman dwelt at Corinth in the austere practice of Christian celibacy. She was denounced to the judge in a time of persecution. This judge had an immoderate love for women, and in order to satisfy this carnal passion, he frequently had recourse to the offices of lenons and the merchants of Prostitution (*cauponatores*). These latter had boasted of the marvelous beauty of the Christian virgin; he found her still more surprising than he had imagined, and he spared nothing in the effort to seduce this virgin, who repelled at once his prayers and his threats. Torments had no effect with this pure and gentle victim. The judge, then, angered at this resistance, conceived the idea, in order to conquer her, of condemning this Saint to public Prostitution. He placed her in a lupanar and commanded the master of the place (*jussit ei qui eas possidebat*) as follows: "Take this girl and pay me every day three pieces of gold (*nummos*)." The proprietor of the lupanar accepted the bargain and proceeded to honor it on the spot. The new prostitute was announced to the libertines of the city by means of a signboard, which assigned her name and fixed her tariff. The debauchees came running, purse in hand, disputing as to who should have the advantage of approaching her first; they disputed, these unworthy ones, the treasure of that virginity which did not even protect itself. "Listen," said the poor woman, who could not resign herself to suffer martyrdom; "I must reveal to you what I have hidden from the lenon and what I beg of you to keep secret. I have an ulcer (*ulcus*) in my shameful parts; this ulcer exhales a bad odor; moreover, it is of a contagious character. I do not want you to despise me. . . . Give me a few days rest and I will give myself to you when I am cured." They all retired without asking any more. The virgin, seeing herself delivered from these executioners, at least for a few days, prayed God to complete her deliverance by giving her death. Suddenly, there came into the lupanar a young man who appeared too animated to be capable of being convinced

by the fable of the ulcer. The unfortunate virgin was terrified, believing that her virginity was doomed; but this young man was a Christian, pious and chaste, who had learned of the risk which his sister in Jesus Christ was running. He had formed a plan to save her and had gained admittance to the place by paying a price in silver. He changed garments with her, and he remained, his face veiled, in the obscene place which the girl had left. When this substitution was learned, and the change of sex was verified, the Christian was condemned to death and given to the beasts, or rather, according to one commentator, to all the horrors of unnatural Prostitution.

This was not the only Christian woman who left the lupanar a virgin; legend cites another who, after having, in the character of a meretrix prostituted her body in a place of debauchery, recovered her virginity by going to her death. This was the famous St. Theodote, that courtesan of whom we have already spoken, who suffered persecution about the year 249, during the reign of the Emperor Phillip. When the praetor ordered her to sacrifice to the gods: "It is enough," she cried, "that I am a prostitute to all the world. I shall not add this to my other crimes in order that, on the day of judgment, I may at least be able to say that I have not betrayed the true God!" She was sent to prison, where she passed twenty-one days without taking any nourishment.

When she reappeared before the judge, she addressed a public prayer to Christ: "I beseech You," she said, "to absolve me of the crime into which I have fallen at the instigation of the devil, for they call me without reason a meretrix. Fortify my courage and look on me with clemency, so that these atrocious tortures may not have even the power to move my heart." The judge proceeded to interrogate her. "As to my station in life," she said proudly, "I am a courtesan, but as to my religion, I am a Christian, if only I may be all the while worthy of Christ." She was condemned; the crowd exhorted her to sacrifice to the gods; her ancient lovers supplicated her to spare her own life. "Hang her from the gibbet," said the judge, "and tear her flesh with

combs of iron." She bore it all, singing the praises of the Lord. Vinegar and lead were poured upon her wounds; her teeth were drawn; but she did not cease to pray in a loud voice. Finally, in order to make her keep silent, they stoned her. The Christians who buried her body were surprised, upon making an examination, to discover that this courtesan was a virgin.

Sometimes, in place of sending a virgin into a lupanar and giving her thus to public outrage, the judge would abandon her to some old libertine who would engage not to bring her back until she had been defiled and rendered fit for capital punishment. This was what happened to St. Dionysia, who appeared before the pro-consul Optimus, with three Christians named Peter, Andrew and Paul. The pro-consul threatened her with being burned alive if she did not sacrifice to the idols. "My God is greater than you," was her response, "and that is why I do not fear your threats!" The pro-consul did not send her to the pyre, but he abandoned her to the good pleasure of two young debauchees (*ad corruptendam*). These two led her away with them to their house and united their efforts to make her yield to their criminal obsessions. This unequal struggle lasted until the middle of the night, without their being able to triumph over a virtue that was so courageous (*ut ei vim turpitudinis inferrent*). Then their ador commenced to weaken and the demon of impurity forsook them (*marescebat eorum cupiditatis libido*). Whereupon, a sudden light illuminated all the room, and an Angel appeared who took the despairing virgin under his protection. The two would-be corruptors, frightened, fell to the knees of the chaste young girl, who raised them up, smilingly: "Fear nothing," she said to them, "for this is my tutor and my guardian; it is for him that I have submitted to your impotent insults." The two pagans besought her to intercede for them with this divine protector, and promised to be converted, swearing that they would never again raise a hand against the virgins of the Lord.

We are authorized in believing that these attacks on Christian virgins took place, principally, during the great persecution of

Diocletian. The prefect of Egypt, named Hierocles, had enjoined all the judges to apply, without exception, this penalty to all women who proclaimed themselves virgins for the love of Christ. This Hierocles, whom the *Acts* of the martyrs frequently referred to as Heraclius, was especially bent upon the persecution of women, and he gave the latter over impitiously to the agents of Prostitution (*sanctas Dei virgines lenonibus trabentem*, say the *Acts*, published by Ruinart, Volume II., Page 196). It is not difficult to believe that, in many cases, the judge himself did not disdain to be the executioner of his own orders. This was the case with the judge, Pristus, who did much harm to Christians at the same period. The *Golden Legend* of Jacques de Voragine pictures him as an iniquitous and lustful man. Euphemia, daughter of a senator, went to accuse herself before Pristus and to claim the favor of martyrdom, complaining of the fact that she had been spared this blessing theretofore, despite her profession of the Christian faith. Pristus caused her to be beaten with rods and sent to prison. He was not slow in following her there, and he endeavored to violate her, but the Saint defended herself and the Grace of God paralyzed the lubricity of the pagan. The latter believed that he had been overcome by the wiles of sorcery, and so charged his agent with the task of seducing with promises or vanquishing with threats the intrepid prisoner; but the agent was not able to open the door of the dungeon against which even hatchets were merely blunted, and so, he was seized by the Devil, who led him to tear himself to pieces with his own hands. The judge vainly exposed the virgin to various tortures, which could not succeed in depriving her of life, much less of her virginity. And so, he gave orders to give her over to all the young libertines who desired to abuse her, until she died; but these libertines were not so anxious to have an affair with a magician, and the most audacious would not cross the threshold of the cell where the Saint had locked herself in the expectation of being dishonored. One of them, however, to whom lust had given heart, dared to enter this cell; he was surprised enough to find Euphemia



surrounded by virgins who were praying with her. He timidly confessed his evil intentions and then became a Christian. Euphemia thus remained a virgin, despite the detestable projects of Pristus, who wished to decapitate her, but who did not even have time to unveil the mysteries of this stainless body, for at the very moment when he was about to profane, with an immodest gaze, that virginity of which death had robbed him, he was devoured by a lion which sprang out of the grave, and which did not leave a single trace of this persecutor of virgins. "Holy and triumphant virgin," cries St. Ambrose, from whom we have borrowed this tale, "in receiving the crown of virginity you merited also the palm of martyrdom!" Such examples as these it was that won for virginity and Christian chastity those souls rescued from Prostitution and the impurities of paganism.

## CHAPTER IV

WE HAVE said that if the continence and chastity of the first Christians were suspect in the eyes of the Gentiles, the heretics had done only too much to justify the opinion of the credulous in this respect. These heretics appeared, above all, to have taken on themselves the task of defiling evangelic morality and snuffing out under the weight of matter the spiritual torch of Christianity. These were not, moreover, pagans in disguise who had penetrated the sanctuary of the Church of Christ in order to dishonor it by introducing the impurities of idolatry and by improving upon the doctrines of Epicurus and the ancient Greek philosophers; these were enlightened Christians, if one may make use of this modern expression; these were fanatic innovators who desired to find a powerful auxiliary to pleasure in the triumph of a religion that was wholly metaphysical. For three centuries this schism did not cease to reproduce and transform itself in the very bosom of the nascent Church, and Prostitution was almost always employed as a means of propaganda and of mysterious domination by the followers of these heresies, which frequently came from the beliefs and the religious manners of India.

The first heresy which made an inroad into Christianity goes back to the time of the apostles and derives, it may be, from the ancient traditions left by the cult of Baal in Judea. The second *Epistle* of St. Peter, which Christian chronology dates from the year 65, appears to have reference to this heresy, the author of which was one of the seven deacons of the Church. "Now there have been false prophets among the people," said St. Peter, "even as there shall be among you false doctors, who shall introduce the sects of perdition and who shall deny the God who has re-

deemed them, by soon bringing perdition upon themselves, and many shall imitate the debauches of these evil ones, by which shall be blasphemed the voice of truth.” St. Peter goes on to say that God, who let loose the deluge on the ancient world, while sparing Noah and his family; who reduced to ashes the impious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, by rescuing Lot from impure contact with the inhabitants of these two cities (*a luxuriosa conversatione eripuit*); this same God shall deliver from persecution those who honor Him and shall reserve the punishment of sinners to the day of judgment. Among these sinners, He distinguishes particularly those who, entrapped by the flesh, walk in the passions of impudicity (*qui post carnem in concupiscentia impudicitiae ambulant*), despising all domination, audaciously satisfied with themselves and fearing not the sects of the blasphemers. “These men, like unreasonable beasts who run naturally to their death, blaspheme against that of which they are ignorant, perish in their corruption and receive the recompense of their iniquity; those who look upon the flesh as one of the delights of the world, hurl themselves into these delights of defilement and infamy (*coinquinationis et maculae deliciis affluentes*), while you prostitute yourselves at immodest feasts; they who have eyes filled with adultery and always burning for sin (*oculos habentes plenos adulterii et incessabilis deliciati*); those who seduce weak souls and who have a heart practiced in lust; sons of malediction, they wander, far from the right road, like Balaam, who loved the wages of iniquity.” We may see in this passage, which is confused enough, that these heretics did not pride themselves on remaining chaste and pure; but it is difficult, from the text of the *Vulgate*, to determine the sort of impurity with which St. Peter is reproaching them. One commentator, giving to this comparison of the Nicolaites with Balaam an interpretation which we do not appreciate, supposes that their heresy had given the ass an infamous role to play, if we may explain in this sense a versicle which we shall not translate, inasmuch as we do not wish to add or

take away anything from the original: *Subjugale mutum animal, hominis voce loquens, prohibuit prophetae insipientiam.*

However, if there was no question of bestiality in this heresy of the Nicolaites, we may not doubt that sodomy was to be found mingled with it under the cloak of Catholic fraternity. The Fathers of the Church, who speak of the Nicolaites with as much horror as indignation (St. Ignatius, *Epist. ad Trall, et ad Philadelph.*; St. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, I., III; St. Irenaeus; St. Epiphany, etc.), had not witnessed the commencement of this abominable sect and knew of it only what they had learned from oral tradition. According to a number of them, the deacon, Nicolas, whom St. Irenaeus formally describes as the *master of the Nicolaites*, had conceived his odious heresy in order to revenge himself on the apostles, notably on St. Peter, who had blamed him for having taken back his wife after he had separated from her in order to preserve his continence. Nicolas, in order to excuse his weakness, began to teach brazenly, that, in order to achieve eternal salvation, it was necessary to be defiled with all sorts of impurities. The reasoning on which he based this monstrous doctrine was not of a nature calculated to absolve him; he pretended that a defiled body must be more agreeable to God, for the reason that the merits of the Divine Redeemer would have more room to work upon it in order to render it worthy of Paradise. Other Fathers of the Church endeavored to defend the name of Nicolas against the shame of this execrable heresy which, under his name, was so widespread among the Christians. They declared that this Nicolas had lived chastely under the conjugal roof, having no relations with other than his legitimate wife, who gave him a son and a number of daughters. The son became Bishop of Samaria and the daughters died virgins. As to the notorious precepts which were attributed to him, he was guilty of having employed but one ambiguous expression, by saying *abuse the flesh* in place of *mortify the flesh*. His disciples, it was said, had taken literally this vicious saying, and they did not



deprive themselves of this abuse of the flesh on the responsibility of the pious deacon who had intended no malice by it.

This was not the only exaggeration of the legend relating to Nicolas, whom the Church found frequent cause to curse on account of the excesses of his pretended imitators. It was said that his wife was very beautiful and that he, for his part, was very jealous. The apostles reproached him for his jealousy, so much so that, in order to escape their continual sarcasms, he summoned his wife to an assembly of Christians and in a loud tone of voice, authorized her to take whom she would as a husband. The legend says no more than this, and we do not know whether the wife of Nicolas profited by this authorization. However this may be, we may see in the conduct of Nicolas an excitation to debauchery and a plenary indulgence accorded to the sensual desires. The first Nicolaites were not interested in finding dogmas for their licentious heresy; they changed nothing in the Christian teaching, except that they preached by example a forgetfulness of all sexual modesty. Later, in order to justify their separation from the Church, they attacked the divinity of Jesus Christ and maintained that the most illicit pleasures were good and holy, seeing that the Son of God was able to experience them by dwelling in an earthly and sensible body. Soon, without abandoning their obscene practices, their teachings began to approach those of the Gnostics, and to be confounded with the latter, new sects being formed under the names of *Phibionites*, of *Stratitotics*, of *Levitics* and of *Barborites*. These new sects, the abominations of which St. Epiphany described at the end of the fourth century, had, all of them, the same object, the contentment of the carnal appetites and a return to the instincts of nature. They were perpetuated secretly up to the twelfth century, when they endeavored to come out of their obscurity, only to return to it forever.

The heresies of the first centuries were divided, so to speak, into two distinct classes; those of the body and those of the spirit. These latter, among which it is sufficient to name those of Sabelius, Eutychus, Symmachus and Jovinian, were only interested in

questions of philosophy, religion and abstract metaphysics; they lost themselves generally in speculations relative to the divinity and mission of Jesus Christ. The heresies of the body brought to imaginations more or less ingenious or extravagant a prodigious outburst of sensuality, as object or as means. Gnosticism, emanating from the Asiatic religions, had come to attach itself to all the branches of the Christian religion and came near stifling the latter with its foliage, which was frequently full of poison and of scandal. The doctrine which was most common among these heretics was that of the community of women and the promiscuity of the sexes. The Carpocratians and the Valesians professed this doctrine towards the beginning of the twelfth century. Carpocratus, who had studied in the pagan school of Alexandria, was but a disciple of Epicurus, although he called himself a Christian. He made of Jesus Christ, as a matter of fact, an Epicurean philosopher, who had been placed, he said, in direct communication with God, who had conquered the demons who were the creators of the world. These demons having been locked in Hell, evil no longer existed upon the earth, and everything which might be done by men was, therefore, licit and authorized, so long as they followed this maxim of the Gospel: do not do to another what you would not have him do to you. It is easy to understand how such a precept as this left nothing of Christian continence, and how the fiery Carpocratians must have abused themselves and others in the interests of their brutal passions. Modesty, that noble and touching fiction which distinguished intelligent beings from the brute, was suppressed by these sectaries, who denied it, and who looked upon it as injurious to Divinity. Carpocratus did not take his heresy with him to the tomb; his son, Epiphany, who also had learned the Epicurean and the Platonic philosophy in the schools of Alexandria, had time to complete the philosophic system of his father, although he died at the age of eighteen, by decreeing that women should be held in common among the Carpocratians, and that no woman should have the right to deny her favors to anyone who demanded

them of her by virtue of a natural right. Epiphany was looked upon as a god, and a statue was raised to him at Samos, a city of Cephalonia. One woman of this sect, named Marcellina, came to Rome about the year 160 and there made many proselytes by the sweat of her body. It was in the agapes, or nocturnal feasts, that the Carpocrations and the Epiphanites committed their infamies: they would eat and drink with little sobriety; then when the meal was over and grace had been said, the king of the meal would cry out three times: "Take away the lights and the profane!" Then the torches were extinguished, and what took place in the darkness, without distinction of sex, age or relationship, left no traces even in memory, being, in the eyes of the doctors of this sect, but a confused image of nature before the act of creation.

The Fathers of the Church, St. Epiphany (*Haer.*, 27), thundered against the mysterious prostitutions of these heretics, who appeared to have taken upon themselves the task of dishonoring the Christians; but the sectaries of Carpocratus and Epiphany were saints compared to the Cainites and the Adamites, whom the twelfth century saw greatly multiplied in the bosom of the Church. The name of the inventor of Cainism is not known; there is ground for supposing that he was one of those audacious Gnostics who had no fear in surrendering to the most perverse impulses of humanity in order to establish their impure dominion over a credulous herd of slaves. The Cainites took for a dogma the rehabilitation of evil and the triumph of matter over spirit. They set themselves thus, *à rebours* to the interpretation of the Holy Books, and they honored as victims who had been unjustly sacrificed the most execrable types of human depravation, all who had been marked with the scourge of Divine reprobation, from Cain to Judas Iscariot. Cain above all, had the sorry honor of exciting to the highest degree their admiration and esteem. They justified thus the murder of Abel. There is to be recognized in this frightful doctrine a breath of Persian Arimanism, applied to a reading of the Bible and the Gospels. They glorified in imitating the

hideous vices which were attributed to Cain, and which they zealously sought among the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; they protested against the destruction of these cursed cities, and they flattered themselves that they would one day be able to rebuild them under the protection of Cain, who personified for them the principle of evil, or the Ariman of Zoroaster. The Fathers of the Church were, however, misled, it may be, in combating a heresy which they did not fundamentally understand, for it is difficult to believe that such turpitudes could take place publicly and be produced under the sway of a Christian faith. The Cainites did not contest the divinity of Jesus Christ and his work of redemption. How reconcile this belief with a cult of evil and abomination? "There was no bodily impurity into which they did not plunge," says Bayle, who merely analyzes the statements of Tertullian, of Theodoret, of St. Irenaeus and of St. Epiphany, "no crime in which they did not believe they had the right to participate, for according to their abominable principles, the path of salvation was diametrically opposed to the precepts of the Scriptures. They imagined that every sensual pleasure was presided over by some genius; it was for this reason that they did not fail, when they were preparing for some indecent action, nominally to invoke the genius who was in charge of the pleasure which they planned to taste." This definition of the cult of the Cainites would tend to prove that they were not free from the habits of pagan idolatry, and they merely had replaced the gods with certain genii. Nothing has been preserved of their books, and we may regret especially their famous *Ascension of St. Paul to Heaven*, a sort of Apocalypse in which the vision of St. Paul revealed to these heretics an incredible theory of impurity. However this may be, there is no doubt that the Cainites were more or less given to the distractions of anti-physical love, and it was in order to seduce women into the sect of the Cainites, who despised women, that one young woman named Quintillia desired to establish a heresy within the heresy, and so preached a Cainism for the use of women; this latter Cainism, less infectious



than that of Sodom, came in direct line from Sappho, but figured also, undoubtedly, in the marvelous tales of the vision of St. Paul. It had, thanks to Quintillia, who may have been no more than a courtesan, much vogue in Africa, where it took deep root, especially at Carthage.

The Adamites traced their doctrines back to the first man, in order not to be outdone by the Cainites, but from this first man they did not separate the woman, as did the heirs of Cain and Sappho. The founder of their sect was a man named Prodicus, who had been a Carpocratian, but who did not approve the mystery which Carpocrates had imposed on the operations of the flesh. According to him, that which was good in darkness, could not be an evil in the light of day. He had thus the audacity to permit and to prescribe "public copulations between two sexes." It is thus that Bayle has translated this text of Theodoret: *prophanos largeuein* (*publice scortari*). St. Clement of Alexandria imputes the same infamies to the sect of Carpocrates, who, he said, must have established his laws for dogs, goats and swine. The initiation of the Adamites took place at one of those agapes at which the libidinous heretics found an open field for their detestable mysteries. Prodicus changed somewhat the customs with regard to copulations, which took place at hazard and were repeated without selection in a profound darkness which made all ages and ranks equal. Theodoret (*Haeret.*, Book I. and V.) tells us that Prodicus, dissatisfied with the deceptions of this shady variety of orgy, invited the celebrants at the agapes to take the precaution of arranging rendezvous between themselves in advance, in such a manner that the right parties would be able to meet the moment the lights were extinguished. The conditions of the debauch were discussed and treated amicably before the agape had brought the guests together around the Carpocratian board. Theodoret here relies upon the testimony of St. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, Book III), who speaks of these immodest conventions which were but imitation of the convivial manners of pagan Rome. For Horace in one of his *Odes* (Book III., 6), signals these adulteries which

were thus executed with the knowledge and almost under the eyes of the drunken husband, when the torches had been carried away and the place had been given over to pleasure.

*Mox juniores quaerit adulteros  
Inter mariti vina; neque eligit  
Cui donet impermissa raptim  
Gaudia, luminibus remotis;  
Sed jussa coram non sine conscio  
Surgit marito; seu vocat institor,  
Seu navis Hispanae magister,  
Dedecorum pretiosus emtor.*

We see from this citation that the pagans, and Horace himself, were true Carpocratians without knowing it, while conversely, the Carpocratians were but poorly converted pagans. Prodicus, in order to motivate these monstrous derangements, pretended "that souls had been sent into bodies not to be punished but that, by all sorts of pleasures, they might render homage to the angels or to those genii who had created the world." He had endeavored, moreover, by a detestable sacrilege, to depict the mystic union of brothers and sisters in Christ by the carnal conjunction of the man and woman. We should be grateful to him, however, for not having sanctified, like the Cainites, the manners of Sodom and for not having attempted to destroy humanity in its cradle.

However, after Prodicus, who lived about the year 120, the Adamites underwent a moral reform, the author of which is unknown; they vowed themselves to continence and to virginity, although they abused the imitation of their patron by desiring to return to a state of nudity characteristic of the first man. The Fathers do not give us a reason for this bizarre heresy, and so we are reduced to conjectures, which lead us to believe that the Adamites, in adopting this indecent costume for their ceremonies, if not for the public rites of the cult, were animated by the inten-

tion of recalling the innocence of man prior to Adam's sin. "They assemble," says St. Epiphany, "as nude as when they came out of their mothers' bellies, and in this state, they conduct their readings, their prayers and their other religious exercises." St. Augustine merely repeats, almost textually, the words of St. Epiphany: "Thus, men and women, they assemble nude, they listen to readings, they pray and celebrate the sacraments all in a state of nudity (*nudi itaque mares feminaeque conveniunt, nudi lectiones audiunt, nudi orant, nudi celebrant sacramenta*)."

Despite this delicate test of their continence, the Adamites remained chaste, or at least, never went so far as to commit acts of the flesh, but they did not preserve the modesty of the eyes, and the spectacle of all these nudities defiled their thoughts by making it all the harder for them to resist the prickings of concupiscence. But St. Epiphany and St. Augustine state, expressly, that the Adamites did resist this continual provocation to lust, and that they ended by regarding themselves as inert beings. Nevertheless, St. Clement of Alexandria, who is obstinate about seeing imitators of Prodicus in those who inherited his heresy, accuses them always of copulating in the darkness, following their impure love feasts: *To kanaischynnon auton ten porniken tauten dikaiosunen ekpodon poiesamenous phos te toulychnon peritrope mignusthai*. We should not dare, in the face of such opposed opinions to pronounce for or against the deeds of the Adamites; we think, however, that these sectaries, who were merely Gnostics of a certain sort, must have conducted themselves in their nocturnal assemblages as shamefully as that nudity, which they paraded in honor of Adam and Eve, permitted.

This allegoric nudity even became, for certain Adamites of both sexes, a normal condition of the ascetic life. They remained nude, with a cincture which covered their loins, and they would hide themselves, either in groups or in isolation, in the middle of the woods and deserts; they would flee the approach of every human being who was distinguished from them by his clothing and they liked to believe that they had returned to the first age of

the world, when Man led the life of animals. This bestial manner of life must often have produced in these degraded beings, a complete forgetfulness of their sex and an absolute deadening of the senses. Also, when they sometimes returned to the society of their kind, without consenting to show themselves clad in public, they pretended that they no longer belonged to any sex and appeared to be insensible to the sight and touch of flesh. "They are men with the men," says St. Clement of Alexandria, "women with women; they desire to belong to both sexes." This complementary phrase implies perhaps something different from that which Evagrius saw in reporting this singular fact (*Histor. eccles.*, Book I, Chapter 21). It must, as a matter of fact, be understood that satyrs of this sort gave themselves to all sorts of filthy impulses without distinction of sex or of person. It was thus, at least, that the Adamites came down to us across the centuries, up to the sixteenth century, when they make their last appearance, assuming that they are not to be recognized still in the Convulsionists of the eighteenth century.

These excesses of impudicity, which the heresiarchs, enveloped in the mantle of the new faith, led inevitably to a reaction in the form of excesses of continence and asceticism. It was always Gnosticism which borrowed a Christian form and created a new household of heresy. We see born, in succession, a number of Gnostic sects, which condemned themselves to strange servitudes in the matter of chastity: some, in order to resemble Jesus Christ, who died a virgin; others in order to approach as near as possible the state of Man in Paradise; the former with the object of slaying sin by not perpetuating humanity; the latter to free themselves from the sway of the Devil, who was incarnated in woman. The Encratites, or the continent ones, the Marcionites and the Valentinians made their appearance at about the same time in the middle of the second century, when they became known for their exaggerations of chastity. The founder of the sect of the Marcionites, Marcion, son of a pious bishop of Sinope in Paphlagonia, had not been, at first, a very edifying model for this sort of con-



tinence, for he began his career as an heresiarch with an act of a fornication, for which he was unable to win absolution from his father; he revenged himself for his excommunication by starting trouble among the orthodox. After having debauched a young girl, he bound himself, body and soul to a woman who aided him in his heretical apostolate. He admitted only the states of celibacy and absolute continence as permissible among Christians, and he only baptised those, male or female, who made a vow to preserve their carnal and spiritual purity. He looked upon it as well, however, that the Sodomites had been delivered from Hell to the merits of the Redeemer, and he gave the assurance that, since their bodies were not to be resurrected, the stain they had suffered would not alter their souls, when the latter arrived before God, purified by death. The Marcionites did not avoid the society of women, since they believed that they had conquered the flesh. Women with them might administer baptism and say mass, provided they were pure of hand and soul. Marcion, in the manner of the principal Gnostics, recognized in nature the existence of two principles, the one good and the other bad, which were eternally at war with each other; he attributed to continence the power of combating and vanquishing all the ambushes of the Devil, whose fortress was situated in the head of woman. This heresy, despite the privations which it imposed upon its followers, made so much progress throughout the empire, that Constantine the Great published an edict against the Marcionites in the year 326, while more than a century later, Theodoret, Bishop of Tyre, converted more than ten thousand in the course of his episcopacy.

Valentine, who lived at the same time as Marcion, was more versed than the latter in the abstractions of the Gnostic and Platonic philosophy, but like the latter, like many philosophers of Alexandria, he judged it a useful thing to place man under the yoke of continence. His obscure religious theories only appealed to the highest aspirations of the spirit, which endeavored to rid himself of the useless weight of the body. The Valentinians, who carefully avoided the incitations to lust, mortified the

body in such a manner as to leave it no longer the free use of its faculties; they drank no wine, but fasted, slept little and that on the hard ground, avoided fixing their gaze on exterior objects, and endeavored only to lose themselves in the clouds of metaphysics. They were often accused of disorders which would have been beyond their strength, if these disorders had not been contrary to the very essence of their doctrine. The Marconites became almost ethereal beings, immaterial intelligences, in their constant commerce with the genii or the eons which they had imagined as intermediaries between Man and the Divinities. It is possible, however, that the mystic Prostitution of Incubi and Succubi, which frequently defiled the most chaste couch in the Middle Ages, was born quite naïvely of this heresy of the Marcionites. The Encratites, or the continent ones, were not less severe than the Marcionites regarding sins of the flesh. They took their origin from the epistles of St. Paul, explained by Tatian, the disciple of St. Justin. Tatian had made a dogma of the repugnances of St. Paul to the marriage state; he had condemned this sacrament as representing a detestable union, and he prescribed celibacy as a path to the angelic life. This was merely the abuse of a lively and impatient faith, for Tatian proposed nothing less than to transport to the earth the perfections of the elect of Paradise. The sectaries who were followers of this heresiarch carried even to the point of madness this passion for purity and continence; they held that they alone were pure and perfect among the Christians, and they made such a use of water, exteriorly and interiorly as a symbol of ablution, that they were nicknamed *hydroparastates*.

The Valesians, who had merely a *vogue de curiosité* about the year 240, pushed still further the cult of corporal purity, for their founder, the Arabian, Valesius, taking his inspiration from the sacrifice which Origen had made of his sex to the mortification of the flesh, succeeded in persuading himself that true chastity could only reside in a mutilated body. He declared that, in order to annihilate the sin of incontinence, one must destroy the cause,

and he felt no regret at being separated from that perilous virility which had led him to sin and to cause others to sin. His disciples failed to perceive that they were merely competing with the priests of Cybele; and not content with submitting to a castration which strongly resembled martyrdom, they devoted themselves with a sort of frenzy to the propagation of their cruel heresy; they never went out except armed with a small, sharp and pointed knife, like that with which surgeons cut off the members or the testicles of slaves destined to the condition of a eunuch or the trade of the spadones; they were to be seen casting here and there their glances and searching a victim, without interrupting the thread of their mental prayers. They did not find many proselytes who would consent to become eunuchs, but they employed violence in order to conquer the body and bring it to a Valesian degree of chastity, and they impitiously mutilated all the victims, Christian or pagan, who fell into their hands. It was principally in Judea that these mad heretics, who otherwise followed the doctrines of the Gnostics, thus attacked poor sinners under the pretext of making of them living angels.

But the Gnostics were not all of them radical enemies of the works of the flesh. Under the name of Manichaeans, on the contrary, they proclaimed, along with a hatred of marriage, the free and immoderate exercise of all the sensual faculties. These Manichaeans, who almost equalled the number of true Christians in the fourth century, and who have crept down to our times, despite the rude warfare which the Church has made on them, desired, if we are to believe the Fathers and the councils, to erect a cult of the senses and to establish religious Prostitution in place of the Gospel and the cult of the spirit. The author of this mysterious heresy was a Persian named Manes, who had laid down his strange doctrine in books from which his disciples drew the principles for their impurities. It is hard to believe what St. Augustine tells us regarding their system of treating souls separated from bodies. According to this system, God had constructed a great machine, composed of twelve aerial vessels,

which were continually filled with souls, and which bore those souls across space to the moon and the sun, but this voyage took place under bizarre auspices. There were in these vessels divine virgins who took the masculine form in order to make love to women and the feminine form in order to excite the ardor of the man; in such a manner that the souls of the two sexes did not cease to find purification in this cosmic coitus; for, said the Manichaeans, during the emotion produced by lust, light is disengaged from dark and material substances and leaps toward Divinity (*ut per hanc illecebram, commota eorum concupiscentia fugiat de illis lumen, quod membris suis permixtum tenebant*). If the Manichaeans had placed prostitution in the celestial spheres, they still had no desire to abolish it upon the earth, for they looked upon the venereal act as a holy work, provided the holiness of this act was not compromised by marriage or by conception. *Et si utuntur conjugibus*, says St. Augustine (*de Haeresibus*, Chapter 46), *conceptum tamen generationemque devitant, ne divina substantia quae in eos per alimenta ingreditur dinculis carnis ligetur in prole*. It was an incredible act of the imagination to see in the generation of children a diminution of the divine substance which each took into himself through the process of nutrition. With ideas as monstrous as these, the Manichaeans were convicted in advance of all the turpitudes which were attributed to them, and they were persecuted by the Christians, just as the Christians had been by the pagans. "Since they believe that the spirit came from the good principle," says Maimbourg, in his *Histoire de Saint Léon*, "and that the flesh and the body are of evil origin, they teach that one must hate the latter, do shame to it and dishonor it in all manners possible; and in accordance with this infamous precept, there is no sort of execrable impudicity with which they do not defile themselves in their assemblages." This however, is not a reason for crediting the horrible and disgusting practices of which St. Augustine accuses them, when he asserts that they were in the habit of mingling with their hosts and their daily food human semen: "*Qua occasione vel potius execrabilis*



*superstitionis quandam necessitate coguntur electi eorum, velut eucharistiam conspersam cum semine humano sumere, ut etiam inde, sicut de aliis libis quos accipiunt, substantia illa divina purgetur . . . Ac per hoc sequitur eos, ut sic eam et de semine humano, quam admodum de aliis seminibus, quae in alimentis sumunt, debeant manducando purgare.”* Is it not evident that Prostitution was everywhere that the Christianity of the Gospel was not?

## CHAPTER V

CHRISTIANITY, when it was in a struggle with pagan Prostitution, found also, in its own bosom, unworthy adversaries who disgraced it with the most abominable disorders. These adversaries came sometimes from those profane religions which the faith of Christ was sapping in their shameful roots, roots bound up with the shameful passions of man, who had created his gods in his own image. Sometimes, too, the most redoubtable heresiarchs were but ignorant catechumens or well-intentioned deacons, exalted and blinded by austerity, prayer and solitude. In this manner, excessive continence might lead to excessive impurity; that was how the Christians, for a long time chaste and virtuous, came to permit themselves to fall into criminal aberrations, which the Gentiles themselves would not have permitted. The principle of chastity, of soul and body, was the greatest force behind this new law, which made, thereby, submissive slaves in making proselytes. The doctors and the Fathers of the Church did not cease, therefore, to pursue and overthrow paganism under the forms of sacred and legal Prostitution. But, strange thing! while nascent Christianity was conducting this indefatigable warfare on iniquitous doctrines and practices, it did not perceive that sacred Prostitution, and even guest Prostitution, those two sisters as old as the world, had already dared to reappear under a Christian disguise, which completely changed their character and concealed their primitive origin. Thanks to this disguise, under which they were no longer recognizable, although they revealed themselves clearly enough by their acts, they occupied a parasitic place which heresy had conquered for them and from which religious morality was unable to dislodge them until a good while later, by purifying everything which bore a mark of their passage.



It was in the ascetic life of hermits, virgins and the first monks, that guest Prostitution, that naïve form of sacred Prostitution, appears, if not to have been reborn, at least to have endeavored to prove that it could exist in such circumstances. Solitaries of one and the other sex had broken violently with the world and had retired along the Jordan and into the desert of the Thebaid in order to live there a continent and a penitent life, far from sin, that devouring lion which they feared a hundred times more than the lions of these vast solitudes. It took years of this laborious and savage existence for the demon of the flesh to be conquered, for his ardors to be extinguished and for the spirit to become definitely master of the body. During these years of struggle and temptation, in which the revolt of the senses frequently threatened to break all the bounds of continence, the soul knew hours of doubt and weakness, intervals of vertigo and madness. Then, voluptuous hallucinations would surround these poor victims of the Tempter; the holy man or the holy woman was no longer conscious of his individuality or of his state. The bare and narrow cell, the cold and somber cavern, the miserable hut, open to the inclemencies of the weather, would be transformed, in the dreams of the occupant, into a palace embalmed in perfumes, gleaming with silken stuffs and filled with music and with song, laden with vases of gold and silver, with tapestries and cushions and with tables filled with exquisite food and delicious wines. Ordinarily, prayer would triumph over these hellish snares, and the breath of God would dissipate the fascinating cloud; but at these difficult moments, in those nights of burning insomnia, in those days marked by an involuntary return to the things of the earth, if, all of a sudden, a wandering traveler happened to penetrate the asylum of the despairing virgin, if a Christian woman, eager for the consolations of the word of God, happened suddenly to appear before the eyes of a delirious patriarch, the patriarch or the virgin might readily believe that they were once more in ancient Biblical times, and so bow with love before the divine guest whom Heaven had sent them. The Devil aiding the work,

guest Prostitution would resume its sway and leave behind it, in tears and repentance, the fragile virgin whom it had deceived with the illusions of science and the vanities of the human heart. And if there were need that the brothers or sisters who came thus to visit the solitaries should pass for angel and bring with them the beauty of hospitality, was not this always an encouragement to sin, to be determined by the occasion?

In reading the lives of the Fathers of the desert, we see, on every page, how great was the power of the flesh over these energetic natures, exhausted by fastings, macerations and physical sufferings, but exalted also by a terror of sin and an impatience of spiritual perfection. "Alas, my God!" says St. Jerome, the model of anchorites, "how many times, when I was in that frightful solitude, all burned by the heat of the sun, did I believe that I was still living among the delights and pleasures of Rome! My languishing members were horrified at beholding the sackcloth with which they were covered. My skin was as black as that of an Ethiopian. I did nothing but weep and groan. I could not sleep, and if sleep sometimes overcame me and closed my eyes in spite of myself, in spite of all my resistances, I would hurl myself upon the earth, naked, to break my bones rather than to find rest for them. I do not speak of my food, since solitaries, however exhausted they may be, never drink anything but cold water, and since it would be a sort of excess to eat any sort of cooked food. As for me, who found myself in this state, and who had condemned myself to this voluntary pain from the fear I had of Hell; I, who had for companions only scorpions and wild beasts, I imagined, nevertheless, sometimes, that I was in the company of young girls! My face was all pale from fasting; my body was all cold and withered, and yet I felt those impure waves of warmth which revived my concupiscence, even in a body that was half dead. How many times have I prostrated myself at the feet of the Son of God, to bathe those feet with my tears and dry them with my hair! How many times have I passed whole weeks in subduing my rebellious flesh! How many times



have I consumed entire days and nights, crying aloud continually and never ceasing to beat my breast until peace had been given me! I had a horror of my cell, as though it knew all my impure thoughts, and I would go, irritated with myself, to hurl myself into the most savage desert and there lose myself. If I saw some horrible rock, some somber cavern, some ragged mountain top, that was the place I chose in which to offer my prayers to God and overcome my sighs. Finally, God, who heard my sighs and saw my tears, after perceiving that my eyes had been for so long a time fixed on him, would put me into such a state of mind that it seemed to me, all of a sudden, I was in the company of angels, and in these transports of joy I would cry out: 'I will run after you, to follow the odor of your perfumes!'"

This passage, a match for which might be found in the confessions of any Father of the desert, is sufficient to initiate us into those diabolic temptations which besieged these holy persons. There is, here, sufficient explanation of the provocative influence which the sight of a person of another sex must have had upon a mind tortured with concupiscence, upon a body irritated with privations. We have already seen the Abbot Zosimus, pursuing, in the sands of Egypt, a creature wholly nude, with a body burned and black with the sun, who was none other than the famous sinner called Mary the Egyptian. There were, in Africa and Asia Minor, a multitude of girl and women hermits, who devoted themselves to the monastic life, and who did not escape without a combat the terrible emotions of the flesh; this it was which caused St. Jerome, a witness, judge and party to these tyrannical temptations, to say: "I place virginity in Heaven and do not boast possessing it." The history of the Fathers, collected and written by him, is full of singular tales which show us solitaries of both sexes in permanent communication with beings who come to them from Heaven or from Hell, to tempt them or to encourage them. One might, thus, suppose, without desiring to contest the religious and touching character of these extraordinary recitals, that the propinquity of the two sexes in these solitudes, peopled only with

penitents' cells, must have engendered many abuses from the point of view of manners, not to take account of the fiery passions which isolation, silence, fastings and insomnia would develop in an ardent and fanatic soul. The subjugation of the senses was, frequently, a task beyond human strength and the Devil, to whom was attributed these outbursts of lust, would come to aid all the troubles of soul and all the rebellions of the body.

St. Arsenius, who lived wholly nude in the desert, and who fed on herbs like the beasts, fleeing the approach of his fellow men, found, one day, at the door of his cell, a woman aged and of noble birth, who had been led to him through devotion. "If you desire to see my face," he said to her indignantly, "look!" But she did not dare look, and remained prostrated before the solitary. "You shall return to Rome," he added sorrowfully, "and you shall say to the other women that you have seen the Abott Arsenius, and they also shall come to see me!" . . . "With the permission of God," she replied, saddened by the sorrow of the Saint, "I shall not suffer any woman to come here!" . . . "I pray God to efface your memory from my heart!" murmured the poor Abott. This lady returned from her visit to the desert with a feverish and profound bitterness; she wished to die. "Do you not know," said an archbishop, who brought her consolation, "do you not know that you are a woman, and that the Devil employs women in attacking solitaries? That is why Arsenius spoke to you as he did; but he still prays unceasingly for your soul." And the lady consented to live. The legendary who reports this melancholy legend, the naïve Jacques de Voragine, adds a number of other examples which give proof of human fragility among the venerable confessors. A young solitary said to a patriarch, whose disciple he was: "You are old; shall we go back to the world a little while?" . . . "Go where there are no women!" responded the old man. . . . "That can only be in the desert," replied the young man, who had not yet been exposed to meeting women. . . . "Lead me then to the desert!" Another Father, in carrying his own mother across a river, covered his hands with

his cloak. "Why do you cover your hands thus, my son?" the good woman asked him. . . . "The body of a woman is fire!" he replied, chasing the Devil away with the sign of the Cross. "When I touch you, my mother, the memory of other women awakens in my heart!"

The villainous role which the Devil played in causing saints to sin from desire of the flesh is clearly established in the popular legend of St. Barlaam and the King Jehoshaphat, a legend which has frequently inspired romantic epics in all languages during the Middle Ages. Barlaam converted Jehoshaphat, son of an idolatrous King, to whom the legend gives a name undoubtedly allegoric: King Future. This King was desolated at seeing his son become a Christian, and endeavored to lead him back to the religion of the false gods. The magician Theodas, counselled the King to remove his son from all contact with men, and to have him served only by beautiful women, seductive and well adorned. "I will send to him one of the spirits which I have under my orders, in order to lead him into lust," said the magician, "for nothing is more suited than the face of women to seducing young people." In accordance with this perverse advice, the young Christian was locked up in the midst of a seraglio of young women, who incessantly tempted him to sin, and the evil spirit sent by the magician laid hold of Jehoshaphat with such power that the latter would have succumbed, if the God of the Christians had not come to his aid. As it was, he resisted, and submitted his body to the empire of the soul. But they brought to him, then, a daughter of the King who was perfect in her beauty and who produced in him more effect than all the other women; he endeavored to convert her, even while he admired her enchanting beauty. "If you want me to renounce my idols, marry me!" said this siren. "Christians have no aversion to marriage; on the contrary they praise it; for the patriarchs, the prophets and St. Peter, the prince of apostles, all were married." . . . "It is vain for you to persecute me," he replied, turning away. "It is permitted to Christians to marry, but it is not permitted to those

who have made a vow of virginity." She pretended to weep, and he regarded her tenderly. "If you wish to contribute to my salvation," she murmured in a trembling voice, "give me one request, which is little enough: sleep with me this night, and I promise you that at daybreak I shall become a Christian." Jehoshaphat was not prepared for this strange proposition; he knew what a joy the conversion of an idolater was to the angels; he knew, too, how the angels grieve for the sin of lust; nevertheless, he wavered and sought in the glances of the seductive one the shameful courage to sin. Then the Evil Spirit, whose mission it was to make him sin, said to his infernal companions: "See how this young girl breaks down the virtue of this young man whom we have not been able to vanquish. Come, then, let us hurl ourselves upon him, for the moment is opportune." Jehoshaphat, the result was, felt himself swept by the fires of concupiscence, while the Devil was suggesting to him the detestable thought that he ought to save, at the price of his own soul, the soul of this pretty pagan. But before consenting to what had been demanded of his Christian charity, he made the sign of the Cross and began to pray. At once he fell asleep and was transported, in a dream, to the domain of the blessed. Upon awakening, according to the words of the naïve compiler of the Golden Legend, who has not followed the narrative of John of Damascus: "The beauty of this girl and her companions inspired in him no longer anything more than the disgust which one feels at the sight of the filthiest ordure."

The Fathers of the Church believed in the existence of a demon who presided especially over lust, and whose role it was to excite carnal concupiscence among idolators or Christian men. This demon is to be found on every page in the lives of the Fathers and in the legends of the saints; he borrows the most attractive form in order to tempt to evil virgins and confessors; he is often repelled and put to flight, but sometimes, he gains his ends, and he invents the most singular knaveries in order to get around the continence of an anchorite. It would be difficult to say whether



this demon of lust and desire was the same as that of prostitution, whom we meet under this name (*demon scortationis*) in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius (Chapter 26), but who does nothing there to justify his name. A certain aged hermit had spent many years in evading the snares of this demon, who besieged him in a thousand manners with an indefatigable ardor. This hermit had his cell, it is true, on the side of the Mount of Olives, where the Spirit of God is always present. "When will you leave me in peace?" said the pious solitary one day. "Leave me, for you are as old as I am." The demon then appeared to him and promised not to torment him any more, providing the holy man would swear not to reveal to anyone in the world what the demon should confide to him. The hermit was willing to purchase repose at this price, and gave the oath which his tempter demanded; but then the tempter said to him, maliciously: "I advise you not to adore any longer that image which represents a woman holding a child in her arms." The demon retired and the old man remained, greatly worried over such a piece of advice, which his vow prevented him from revealing, even to his confessor. Profoundly troubled in his conscience, he took his way to the neighboring city named Pharaon, and went to confession to the Abbot Theodorus, who absolved him of his perjury: "Only hasten to leave this city, which is but one great lupanar," he said to him, "for you shall not be the strongest against the demon of prostitution, but adore as you go Jesus Christ and his divine Mother." The old man, returning to his cell, found there the demon, who accused him of having perjured himself. "Away from me!" cried the Saint, pursuing the demon away with great signs of the Cross, "I am too old to listen to you or to be afraid of you!"

The Cenobitic life was, thus, besieged by sensual desires and worldly thoughts; the victory of the Tempter frequently depended only on his perseverance in laying snares for the solitaries, for the occasions of sin recurred only too frequently. Guest prostitution spoke in a louder voice than the other teachings of the Church; it not merely found its way, with the heretics, into the

nocturnal feasts, and found a place in the visitations of virgins and Christian widows; it also stalked mysteriously across the solitudes where the brothers and sisters of the new Catholic family met to pray and work in common. Ignorance and credulity prepared the victims who were devoured by the monster of impudicity. It was the heresies which brought in their wake this prodigious relaxation of Christianity, from the year 230 on. "There was no more charity in the lives of Christians," St. Cyprian, an eye-witness of this sorrowful epoch, tells us, "there was no more discipline in their manners; the men combed their beards, the women rouged their faces; the purity of the eyes was violated by corrupting the work of God's hands, and even that of the hair by giving the latter a strange color. Subtleties and artifices were employed to deceive the simple; the Christians surprised their brothers by their infidelities and knaveries. They married with infidels and prostituted to pagans the members in Jesus Christ." This passage and many others bear witness to the persistence of guest prostitution in the lives of Christians of one and the other sex, despite the excommunications of councils and the admonitions of the doctors.

These evil manners, which reigned in so many communities of women must be attributed to the demoralizing influence of wandering and secular monks, whom debauchery and idleness had multiplied everywhere. These heretics lived joyously in the world, without a fixed residence, without fixed occupation, without the means of existence; they were divided into a horde of sects, which were indistinguishable from one another except by their different varieties of debauchery. They all led the same sort of idle and vagabond life, going from city to city, or rather from convent to convent; for before the regular institution of monastic orders, virgins, vowed and consecrated, lived together in retreat and prayer, fleeing the contact and the sight of pagans, but consorting willingly with priests and the faithful. Among these sects of sluggards and debauchees, that of the Sarabaites was to be remarked, who are called *remoboth* by St. Jerome and

*gyrovagues* by the historians of the fifth century. The Sarabaites, whose name in the Egyptian language signifies *the undisciplined*, traced their origin to the Jew Ananias, whom St. Peter punished for his lie by striking him with sudden death, along with his wife Saphira. Although so-called Christians, they did not renounce circumcision, which favored their impure habits. "Everything with them breathes of affectation," wrote St. Jerome, who was not careful to distinguish them from the cenobites and the anchorites, to Eustochia, in the year 384, "they have sleeves and large shoes, and a vestment that is still larger; they give great sighs, are very exact in visiting virgins, tear to shreds the reputation of the clergy and, on feast days, give themselves to the most unbridled and intemperate excesses (*saturantur ad vomitum*)." In the beginning, they formed fraternal associations, by twos and threes, and demanded in return for the labor of their hands only a common and frugal nourishment; but they had frequent disputes, which, according to St. Jerome, came from the fact that, living by their petty labors, they were unable to bear a master; but the cause of these altercations, which often had a serious termination, resulted rather from their jealousies and their amorous rivalries. They were not slow in separating and in seeking each his own fortune. Cassian, in his *Commentaries* (*Collat.*, XVIII, 8), gives us a most hideous picture of the impudent conduct of these dissolute monks, who continued to spread in Egypt and in the wilds of the Theban desert, and who had not yet disappeared in the ninth century, since we see Charlemagne passing a law to destroy them (*Capitul. reg. Francor.*, Volume I, Page 370). We are by no means inclined to defend and justify the Sarabaites, as the savant, Francois Walch, does in his *Memoirs of the Academy of Gottingen* (Volume VI, 1775)). Walch endeavors to distinguish from them the *gyrovagues*, by attributing to these latter all the excesses which were imputed to the Sarabaites. Cassian, whom we prefer to follow in our judgment on these heretics, had seen them at work in upper Egypt, where the city of Oxiringua alone contained more than ten thousand vir-

gins, and where the entire population was composed of cenobites and monks. Four centuries later, when the religious orders had been scattered throughout the Christian world, and when the monastic rule was closing the doors of cloisters to the dangers of guest prostitution, St. Benoit recommended to his disciples that they defy these corrupters: "There is a third and very evil class of monks; it is that of the Sarabaites, who, adhering to no rules and deaf to the counsels of experience, preserve, always, the tastes of the world, daring even to lie to God and to usurp the sacred orders. Gathered together by twos and threes, sometimes alone, they lived without a pastor, shut up, not in the sheepfold of the Lord, but in their own pen. Their desire is their law; they call holy whatever is of their choice; that which they do not love they look upon as forbidden." The rule of St. Benoit also speaks of the gyrovagues, who had neither home nor fireside, and who went seeking adventure, eating, drinking and lodging in the convents, where they left behind them only too many memories of their intemperance, their irreligion and their impurity (*per diversarum cellas hospitantur, semper vagi et nunquam stabiles et propriis voluptatibus et gulae illecebris servientes*).

In order to seek out and discover the final traces of guest Prostitution, we must go back into monastic history and establish the numerous fallings by the way which go to prove the fragility of human virtue and the impotence of the most sacred vow. We shall see how, in the monasteries of women, the reception of dignitaries of the Church and the hospitality accorded to passing monks sometimes brought disorders which did not always become scandals, being veiled in the silence of the religious life. The Church, like an indulgent mother, smothered under her mantle these infractions of her rule and these outbursts of her young flock. Her eyes, however, were fully open to excesses vainly hidden in the shadow of these asylums of penitence. It is less from the Acts of the councils and the monastic chronicles than from tradition, which relies on the testimony of tales and popular poems; it is less from the numerous and singular facts than from



the vague murmurs of echoes of the past that it would be possible to depict the loose manners of certain of the abbeys, where the arrival of a pilgrim or a monk evoked joyous reminiscences of the heresy of the Sarabaites. Those who, so to speak, had eyes and ears in the interior of these impenetrable asylums would relate the scandalous legend and tell marvels of the hospitality of the convent. The *fabliau* of the Count Ory, which is to be found under different names in almost all the literatures of the middle ages, is a gracious indiscretion, which teaches us much more regarding this hospitality than do the authentic and reformatory acts of many convents of women, into which disorder was introduced by these amiable and audacious guests. We do not think it necessary to insist further on this delicate subject of the relaxation of cloistral manners and on the dangers of monastic hospitality.

As to sacred Prostitution, which was the exclusive property of the idolatrous religions, and which had left on the latter its allegorical stains, we are astonished and indignant to find it attempting to revive itself, or at least to keep itself from dying out entirely, in the midst of a religion founded on the purest morality and filled with the noblest aspirations of the soul. It may be explained, moreover, that the cult of images had preserved, here and there, a few traces of this afflicting Prostitution; the Church succeeded the temple. The Chaste statue of the Saviour, of the Virgin and of the saints replaced the brazen statues of Bacchus, of Venus, of Hercules and of Priapus; but the people found difficulty in changing, at once, their gods and their religion; and so they preserved the ancient cult in so far as it could be mingled grossly with the worship of the true God. The priests, on their side, were not scrupulous about appropriating certain forms of religious ceremonial, which they re clad with a Christian signification; they did not restrain the intrusion of certain practices essentially idolatrous and even outrageous to the new faith. Among the first founders of cults, there were undoubtedly perverse or corrupt spirits who abused the candor of neophytes. Thus, in

these ages of ecclesiastical foundations, we see heresy making use of all the results of Christianity and even daring to plant in the Christian religion the roots of sacred Prostitution: now it was dances and music, those insidious auxiliaries to pleasure; now it was the agapes, where the obscenities of the Bacchanalia soon came to be reflected; again, it was saints disguised as divinities whose attributes they bore; yet again the sacraments themselves were not exempt from these shameful imitations. At baptism, as St. John Chrysostum wrote to Pope Innocent I., the women were nude, not being permitted to veil their sex; at the mass, the assistants kissed each other on the lips; in the processions, veiled virgins bore amulets and idols which would have befitted the cult of Isis or of Mythra; the obscene cakes of the pagan fetes, the *coliphia* and the *siligines*, had scarcely been modified in their forms and uses. In a word, sacred Prostitution was sinking root everywhere, like a parasitic ivy, fastening, not on dogma, but on liturgy. It was necessary for the Fathers of the Church and the councils to lead souls and hearts, by degrees, to undergo the divine yoke of evangelic morality.

But if this Catholic cult tore up and cast out the pagan tares which had germinated in its bosom, paganism was still perpetuated in certain beliefs, in certain ceremonies, which surrounded the old stump of pagan Prostitution. It was in this manner that the secret cult of the domestic gods found a stronghold in the *lararium*, as in a fort, and there remained inviolate for centuries after the establishment of Christianity. That was how Venus, Priapus, the god Termes, the Fauns and the wood gods came to have altars and sacrifices even up to the middle ages. Lovers and virgins were the last worshipers of a religion which deified the senses and the passions; but they were no longer the timid adorers of an idol which they incensed at the foot of a secular tree, on the edge of a fountain, in the depths of a grotto, on the top of a mountain; they now claimed, in an imperious tone, and sometimes with threats, the aid and protection of those overthrown gods whom hope still permitted to remain upon their pedestals

and who fell to pieces at the first test of their own impotence. Girls who wished to have lovers or husbands vowed their virginity to the genius of a river, of a forest, of a tree or of a stone, but they did not offer to these genii the physical tribute of their virginity, which, instead, was sacrificed on a flowering lawn, when a shepherd as beautiful as Daphnis happened to be present to receive the victim. It is always Venus who is the soul of the universe, it is Venus who preserves her eternal cult in the presence of nature.

The new converts did not easily separate themselves from the divinities in whose presence they felt young and full of ardor; they were baptized, they went to church, they participated in the love feasts, they felt, with a gentle emotion, the waves of evangelical morality flowing over their souls, but they still were attached by some sensual bond, by some physical instinct, to the apotheosized images of their own passions, to the divine analogies of their own bodies. Venus had been the first personification of this idolatry, under the names of Mylitta of Urania, and of Astarte; she was, also, the last, under her own name of Venus, which the gross rustics pronounced as *Benus*. There has been discovered, at Pompeii, a curious inscription which shows us clearly enough that, from the middle of the first century after Christ, the cult of Venus was the object of sacrilege. It was an unhappy lover who desired to revenge the pain of his own heart on the goddess of love herself: "Let him come here, he who loves! I want to break the ribs of Venus and shatter her loins with the blows of a stick. She has broken my heart, the cruel goddess; why should not I, in revenge, break her head?"

*Quisquis amat, veniat! Benere, volo frangere costas  
Fustibus et lumbos debilitare deae.  
Si potest illa mihi tenerum pertundere pectus,  
Quin ergo non possim caput deae frangere?*

This idolatry crept into the cult of different saints, who had been chosen by popular caprice to replace the familiar gods, in-

voked under the most ordinary circumstances of life. We have no desire, despite the rights of science, to expand upon a theme which casts a blemish and a reflection on the most respectable things; but it is impossible not to recognize the fact that sacred Prostitution had taken refuge under the auspices of these saints, whom the people had created in the image of various false gods, and whom all the efforts of the Church could not succeed in casting into public disrepute until the people had learned to blush for their ignoble superstition. Such were those apocryphal saints who possessed the happy privilege of curing sterility in women and impotence in men. We cannot doubt that these saints came by direct line from Priapus and his immodest assistants, the gods Termes, Mutinus, Tychon, etc. The ecclesiastical authority never extended its protection to such saints as these, who were left, as fetishes, to the adoration of the vulgar, and who only exercised their regenerating influences within a very limited field, with those poor folk, credulous and trusting, who had been convinced by immemorial tradition of the merits of these strange patrons. The majority of them were but Priapi in disguise, and archaeology has shown that, in all the places where this indecent cult was established, there had been, previously, a temple or a statue to, or emblem of, Priapus.

We shall not here pass in review those saints whom sterile women, impotent husbands, and the victims of evil spells, still invoke. Calvin has denounced them to the eyes of public decency in his famous *Treatise on Relics*; Henri Estienne, in his *Apologie pour Herodote*, has placed them on the index, and long before these satirical protests, religion had condemned as superstitious and scandalous the worship of such impurities. There is no need, therefore, for us to say that paganism in its most obscene forms had been perpetuated in the special cults established in various places to the Saints Paterne, René, Prix, Gilles, Renaud, Guignolet, etc. But this last, more celebrated than the others, must occupy our attention a little more closely, since he inherited all the attributes of Priapus, and since he was in France,



up to the Revolution of 1789, the last symbol of sacred Prostitution.

“At the bottom of the port of Brest,” Harmand de la Meuse tells us in his *Anecdotes Relatives à la Révolution*, “beyond the fortifications as you come up the river, there was a chapel near a fountain and a small wood which covered the hill, and in this chapel was a statue of stone honored with the name of a saint. If decency permitted a description of Priapus with his indecent attributes, I should be able to depict this statue. When I saw it, the chapel was half demolished and without a roof, the statue lying on the earth outside without being broken, or rather with certain repairs which appeared to me even more scandalous; sterile women, or those who feared being so, would go to this statue and, after having scratched or scraped that which I do not dare to name, and after having drunk a powder in the water of the fountain, would leave in the hope of being fertile.” We have, here, the cult of Priapus in full sway, at the time of the Revolution, in the most religious province of France.

And yet, the legend of St. Guignolet has no analogy with the fable of Priapus in the Hellenic mythology. This saint, named Winvaloeus, which is translated by *Guignolet*, *Guenolé*, *Guinguilois* and *Wignevalay*, was the first Abbot of Landevenec in the middle of the fifth century and lived in austerity without ever having any communication with women. His legend, nevertheless, impresses us as being full of erotic symbolism, and a number of his direct miracles indicate a specialty which his relics and his statues have preserved for more than thirteen centuries. We shall find the key to his cult at Brest, by establishing the etymology of the name of the Abbey of Landevenec, situated at three leagues from this city: *Landevenec* is, clearly, *Landa Veneris*, and it is certain that this land or plain, bordering the sea, possessed at a remote period a temple, or *fanum* of Venus, very renowned, especially with Breton sailors, who, on returning from their voyages, did not fail to go to sacrifice to the goddess and to commend to her the fertility of their wives. At Landevenec, as

in all the places devoted to the cult of Venus, Christianity purified the pagan temple and sanctified the idol; but popular obstinacy attributed to the saint the qualities of the false god, and Guignolet was merely a continuation of Priapus. The relics of this Breton saint were honored elsewhere, notably at the Abbey of Blandenberg, near Gand and at Montreuil in Picardy. The name of the city of Montreuil probably goes back to the religion of Guignolet and to the symbols of Priapus. According to the legend, a goose had swallowed the eye of Guignolet's sister; the latter opened the belly of the goose, took out the eye and put it back in its place intact. Now the mystic meaning of the eye in the religions of antiquity is well known, especially in the cult of Isis, in which it was mingled with the symbols of Venus; as to the goose, it was the symbolic bird of Priapus. Cambry relates the miracle in his *Voyage au Finistère*, but he does not seek its primitive sense and he does not appear to doubt what the eye of Isis and the goose of Priapus might have in common. The statue of St. Guignolet at Montreuil was still more indecent than that which the mariners adored at Brest. Dulaure, whose evidence, it is true, is not very reliable on questions of this sort, had viewed this statue, which was still venerated in 1789, and he does not hesitate to describe it in his *Description des Principaux Lieux de la France*. It was of rock and represented the saint, entirely naked, lying on his back, with a monstrous phallus. This phallus had a projection in the rear, due to the devotion of the women, who had diminished its proportions from scraping it so much. We regard this detail as a villainous pleasantry of Dulaure, who never loses an occasion to ridicule superstitious practices.

Saint Guignolet, as we have said, was not the only one who had preserved something of the physiognomy and character of Priapus. Brittany, in particular, paid special devotion to this family of saints; she possessed a Saint Paterne, or Paternal, who was invoked at Vannes, and who was concerned with the mysteries of paternity. Henri Estienne has collected the hagiography of the other successors of Priapus, to whom the ithyphallic inscriptions

decree the epithets of *paternus* and of *pantheus*. "As to the evil of sterility (in the face of which physicians so often found themselves hopeless)," says the author of the *Apologie pour Herodote*, "there are many saints who cure it and who bring children to women, merely through a devout apprehension. In the first place, there is Saint Guerlichon, who has an abbey in the city of Bourg-de-Dieu and who draws his worshipers from Romorantin and many other places; he boasts of rendering pregnant as many women as came to him, providing that, during the period of their pregnancy they do not fail in their devotion to the blessed idol which lies flat on its back instead of standing upright like the others. In addition to this, it is required that every day they drink a certain beverage mingled with a powder shaved from those parts of the idol which it is most indecent to name." Henri Estienne, who is rightly indignant at finding so shameful a devotion practiced by Christians, adds that those parts of the statue which it was the custom to shave had been well worn away at the time this image was examined by a person deserving of credence, a person whom he does not name, but who certified to him the authenticity of the fact about the year 1550.

"There is also," he adds, in the land of Constantine in Normandy (which is commonly called Constantine), a Saint Gilles, who has had no less credit in these affairs, however old and decrepit he may be, according to the proverb common among those who amuse themselves with such abuses and sell them to others, and who believe that only old saints can work miracles. I have also heard tell of a certain Saint René in Anjou, who mixes in this business; but as to how the women deport themselves in his presence (he showing them what modesty commands should be hidden), I should have as much shame in writing as my readers would in perusing this." It is undeniable that the destination of these stone saints was the same as that of the idol of Mutinus (see Volume I), which we shall find in the religions of India, as we have already recognized it in those of Phoenicia and Egypt. It would be easy, by means of etymology, to associate Saint Gilles

and Saint Guerlichon with Priapus and the latter's auxiliaries. As to René, or Renaud, there is an allusion here to *reins*, *rena*, and a poet of the sixteenth century has this etymology in view, when, in the following bantering verse, he invokes

*Et saint Renaud pour les rognons.\**

We may also trace back to Priapus the genealogy of Saint Prix, in Latin *Projectus*, which was translated into the vulgar tongue as *Prey* and *Priet*. It would be easy to recognize Priapus in *Projectus*, written *Proiectus*. Nevertheless, this Saint Projet was a bishop of Clermont in Auvergne, who suffered martyrdom in the seventh century; his relics were very widely scattered, as well as his images, and sterile women paid to him a scandalous cult, for which the pious bishop was not responsible. The Acts of the saint are printed in the collection of the Bollandists; but it is to be understood that one will not find there anything to justify the indecencies of this popular superstition; this superstition, moreover, only existed in a small number of country chapels, although more than four hundred churches honored Saint Projet or Saint Prix with considerable ceremony. In the village of Corneil, near Paris, there was to be seen, for a long time, an image of Saint Prix, which may have been originally a statue of Priapus, and which, in any case, had been made after the model of the pagan god. It is easy to understand how, in the beginnings of the Catholic faith, the statues merely changed names as the temples became churches. Finally, the savant, Duchat, in his remarks on the *Apologie pour Herodote*, adds to our catalogue of ithyphallic saints a Saint Arnaud, adored at Saint-Auban (we are unable to say in what province this region was located): "The statue of Saint Arnaud bore an apron which hid its genital parts. Sterile women supposed that, on account of some resemblance in name, Saint Arnaud must possess the same virtue as Saint Renaud of the Burgundians; and so, they would raise the apron of

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\*And Saint Renaud for the kidneys.



this statue, as though the mere inspection of such an object must render them fecund." We shall find, perhaps, in the ancient cult of Priapus or of Horus, some analogous usage, which had become inveterate in the beliefs of the people, and which had persisted, from century to century, as an aid to sterile unions.

A whole book might be written on the vestiges of paganism in the Christian religion; there might be, above all, a curious study of sacred Prostitution through various religious and liturgical metamorphoses; we shall merely content ourselves with pointing out this subject, as new as it is bizarre, to archeologists and savants, who will find in the Fathers of the Church, notably in Lactantius and in Saint Augustine, a hoard of details relative to the tenacity of pagan Prostitution, despite the preaching of the Gospel. The Emperor Constantine did well in destroying, from top to bottom, the temples of Venus at Heliopolis and elsewhere; but he did not thereby turn aside the stream of pilgrims who thronged to these places, consecrated for so many centuries to the generative goddess; and the Christian basilicas which he caused to be erected upon the very sites of these temples retained, so to speak, the brand of the ancient cult. For he was obliged to forbid, by written law (*rursus scriptas misit institutiones*, we read in the life of this Emperor by Eusebius) the prostitution of virgins and married women at Heliopolis in Phoenicia, while his decrees proved unavailing against the primitive form of the cult of Astarte. This sacred Prostitution remained, in a manner, attached to the places which had given it birth and to the debris of the temples which had witnessed its growth. The Christian emperors had need of all the authority they possessed in order to stifle the public cult of the divinities of paganism; but in casting the temples into ruins, in overthrowing the statues and in persecuting the priests, they were unable to touch the deep roots which this cult had left in public opinion and in manners. The peoples of the fields, grosser than those of the cities, but also more faithful to the teachings of their ancestors, took under their protection the gods they loved and whom the moral symbolism of Catholic morality

was powerless to replace; they protected the chapels, the rustic altars and the images of these gods in the dense forests, in the deserts, on the mountain-tops and beside springs; then, finally, yielding to the excommunication of councils and the policing of the bishops, they renounced these images, these altars and these *aediculi*, the ruins of which, however, they always respected, while it was with a sentiment wholly pagan that they gave themselves to the cult of the saints, whom they reinvested with the privileges of their abolished gods. That is how Venus, Flora, Bacchus, Isis, Priapus and the other divinities, representative of nature and the generative principle, came to have faithful followers and what almost amounted to temples, even down to our day.



## CHAPTER VI

WE HAVE seen what the doctrine of the primitive Church was on the subject of impurity and incontinence; we have seen how unanimous the Fathers were in demanding of the faithful a chaste and decent life, even when the latter did not feel capable of bowing themselves to Christian celibacy. There was not, thus, in view of this prescription of absolute chastity for all the members in Christ Jesus, my ecclesiastical jurisprudence specially applicable to the agents of Prostitution. The Church, to be consistent with the very essence of its morality, could neither approve nor recognize as a legal fact this Prostitution, which, however, was practiced under its very eyes, at the doors of its churches, as it had been at those of the temples. Prostitutes were but ordinary sinners whom grace and repentance might save from their shameful trade, and who might at any moment enter upon the way of salvation. As to the instigators of and the speculators in Prostitution, they were confused with the horde of libertines and had no special rank among the slaves of sin. It was for the confessors to regulate penances according to the sin in question and only to accord absolution upon the completion of this penance, which might be public if the sin had been public. All Prostitution, moreover, was included under the generic term of *fornication*, which, on the other hand, was distinguished by various degrees: simple, double, eventual, permanent or repeated fornication. It was, then, quite natural that, in accordance with this fundamental principle which would make every Christian an austere defender of the purity of his body, legal Prostitution should cease to have a reason for being in the eyes of the Church, which did not dare either to authorize or to proscribe or to tolerate it. The councils make no mention of this moral leprosy of society before the fifteenth century, and they take refuge in generalities, condemning in one mass all



sorts of debauchery. They seem to avoid, in dealing with this delicate point, raising any contradiction with human laws, which regulated Prostitution and which recognized it as an impure slavery to the passions on the part of the mob. The councils appear to have remembered always that the Magdalen was a woman of evil life, and that the meretrices had furnished as many martyrs as had the princesses to the faith of Christ, which is possessed of an infinite pity for all sinners.

And yet, there is room to believe that the Church, from the point of view of human policing and the economy of the state, admitted legal Prostitution, or at least closed its eyes on this sorrowful necessity in the lives of peoples. This opinion of the Church is to be found clearly and formally enunciated, not in the text of any council or synod, but in the writings of St. Augustine. "Suppress the Courtezan," he says, in his *Treatise on Order* (Book II, Chapter 12), "and you will overthrow everything by the caprice of the passions." The ecclesiastical law did not interfere with the civil law. St. Jerome (*Epist. ad Furiam*) seems to share the sentiment of St. Augustine regarding the unfortunate victims of Prostitution; he would not crush them under the weight of their own ignominy; he would merely encourage them to lay aside their infamous livery: "The courtesan of the Gospel, baptized in her tears (*meretrix illa in Evangelio baptizata lachrymis suis*), drying with her hair the feet of the Lord, was saved; she did not have a frizzled mitre, creaking shoes; she did not have eyes blackened with antimony; she was not more beautiful for being immodest (*non habuit crispantes mitras, non stridentes calceolos, nec orbes stibio fuliginatos: quanto foedior, tanto pulchrior*)." In another passage of the same epistle, St. Jerome takes up again the question of the degraded woman, by extending to her the hand of penitence. "We do not demand of Christians," he says, "how they have begun, but how they have ended!" The baptism of tears might always wash away ancient defilements and regenerate a soul in an impure body. Finally, St. Jerome, under another circumstance (*Epist. ad Fabiolam*), defines legal Prostitution as

the jurisconsult Ulpianus had done, and says with the precision of a barrister: "The courtesan is she who abandons herself to debauchery with many men (*meretrix est quae multorum libidini patet*)."

We have made a conscientious effort to see what we could find concerning Prostitution, either in the *Canons of the Apostles*, or in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which did not precede the Acts of the councils, despite the origin which was attributed to them in the ancient Church, but which, however, did contain the sincere expression of the canonical doctrine of the first Christians. In only a single instance is there a question of Prostitution properly so-called (*scortatio*); but in a number of places, there is reference to simple or double fornication. In the *Canons of the Apostles*, the sixth forbids the bishops and priests from putting away their wives, even under the pretext of religion, and punishes with excommunication those who thus evade the bonds of matrimony. The eighteenth Canon forbids the admitting of *bigamists* into the clergy, that is to say, those who had been married twice, for the reason that there was a sort of indecency attached to a second marriage, bearing witness to the incontinence of one of the parties. The twenty-third Canon ordains the deposition of clerics who had been deprived of their sexual attributes, from fear of sin or from some other cause. The twenty-fourth condemns the laity for the same reason, and restrains the guilty ones from the holy table for a period of three years. The sixty-first Canon forbids admitting to the clergy anyone convicted of adultery or fornication. The sixty-seventh Canon, finally, pronounces an excommunication against anyone committing an act of violence on a virgin, and obliges the guilty one to marry his victim. We shall remark that in the *Canons of the apostles*, which like the *apostolic Constitutions* are written in Greek, the act of Prostitution is included under the names of *adultery* (*moicheia*) and fornication (*kamarosis*). The Greek word, like the Latin, which is translated by *fornication*, properly signifies a vault or a vaulted place, being figuratively extended to the act itself, which was accomplished in such a place. We do not see

this word in use in its figurative sense, until we find the ecclesiastical writers employing it to replace *meretricium*, *scortatio* and other words still more indecent.

In the *Apostolic Constitutions*, attributed to Pope Clement, elected in the year 67 A. D., but certainly edited in the third century in accordance with the traditions of the primitive Church, we find indicated a rule of conduct which Christian women are to follow in order not to be like the idolaters who had no manners, and who felt the need of none. The Christian women, must first of all, avoid showing themselves in public with those aids of the toilet which the editor of this sacred code calls the signs of Prostitution (*quod sunt omnia meretriciae consuetudinis indicia*, says the literal Latin version): combed hair, artistically arranged and anointed with perfumes, a habit studied and precious, large footgear, falling over the feet, rings of gold on all the fingers. "If you wish to be faithful to your divine Bridegroom," says the Christian legislator, "and if you wish to please him, envelop the head when you appear in the street; veil your face to avoid indiscreet glances; and do not rouge that face which God has given you, but walk with lowered eyes, remaining always veiled, as decency commands women to do (Book I, Chapter 8)." It was forbidden the two sexes to bathe together in the same baths; "it is there especially that the Devil stretches his snares," says the text, "and so a woman shall not go to the bath except with women. Let her bathe herself modestly and moderately, never futilely, never too much, never at midday and, if possible, not every day (*lavet modeste, verecunde et modorate, non autem supervacue, neque nimis, neque saepius, neque meridie, immo si fieri potest, non quotidie*)." The Church did not vary in its advice on the question of bodily ablutions, the use of which it condemned without prohibiting them.

In Book VII of the *Constitutions*, the legislator very clearly defines the principal sins of the flesh: "We may distinguish," he says, "the abominable union against nature, and a union against the law; the first is that of the Sodomites, that ignoble debauchery which mingles man with the beasts; while the second

includes adultery and Prostitution. In these disorders, there is first of all impiety, then iniquity, then, finally, sin; for the former, look to the end of the world, since they do against nature that which is done by nature; the latter, on the contrary, do an injury to others when they violate the marriages of others, and when they divide into two those who have been made one by the Lord; when they render suspect the birth of children, and when they expose the legitimate husband to such ambuscades as these; finally, Prostitution is the corruption of one's own body, and this corruption does not apply to the work of generation in producing children, but has no other object than pleasure, which is an indication of incontinence, and not a sign of strength." This remarkable passage, which sums up the whole doctrine of the Church on the subject of illicit and criminal relations, is here reproduced in its entirety in the original Latin version, in which the obscurities of the Greek text are somewhat clarified: "*Contra naturam nefaria conjunctio aut illa contra legem, illa Sodomitatum et cum bestiis miscentium flagitiosa libido, contra legem vero adulterium et scortatio: ex quibus libidinibus, in illis quidem impietas ets, in iis vero injuria et denique peccatum. . . . Primi enim interitum mundi machinantur, qui quod a natura est contra naturam facere conantur; secundi vero injuriam aliis faciunt, cum aliena matrimonia violant et quod a Deo factum est unum in duo dividunt et liberos faciunt suspectos et legitimum maritum insidiis exponunt: ac scortatio corruptio est proprii corporis, quae non adhibetur ad generationem filiorum, sed tota ad voluptatem spectat, quod est indicium inconinentiae non autem virtutis signum*" (Book VIII, Chapter 27).

This undoubtedly is the first canonical text in which Prostitution is clearly referred to as one of the most blameworthy forms of impurity. In another passage of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Christians are forbidden to employ obscene words, to indulge in brazen glances and to give themselves to wine. "It is of this," says the text, "that adulteries and prostitutions are born (*non eris turpiloquens neque injector oculorum neque vino lentus; hinc enim scortationes et adulteria oriuntur.*)"—Book VII, Chapter



7). Elsewhere (Book IV, Chapter 5), the ecclesiastical law commands the faithful to “flee debauchery; ‘for,’ says Deuteronomy, ‘you shall not offer the gods the price of Prostitution (*fugienda præterea scortatores; non offeres, inquit Deuteronomus, Deo mercedem prostibuli*)’.” The *Apostolic Constitutions*, although edited after the first councils, contain the original doctrine of Christianity, coming from the Scriptures and the Gospel. This same doctrine was later developed and interpreted in the decisions of the councils. Thus, the opinion of the Church has not varied on the subject of Prostitution, which it calls *adultery* or *fornication*.

The famous council of Elvira, or Elna, which appears rather to have been a collection of a number of councils, since we do not know at what time it was held, scholars placing it sometimes in the year 250 and sometimes in 324, this council, *Eliberatanum* or *Illiberitanum*, affords us a certain number of decisions on the subject in hand which are not at variance with the *Apostolic Constitutions*. The twelfth Canon deprives of communion, even of the last sacrament, mothers, parents and all others who shall prostitute their daughters. It also excommunicates whoever shall practise the lenocinium by selling his own body or that of his neighbor: *Si lenocinium exercuerit eo quod alienum vendiderit corpus vel potius sucum*. The thirteenth Canon pronounces the same penalty against those who, after having been consecrated to God, shall have violated their vow and lived in debauchery. The fourteenth Canon: “Girls who shall have failed to preserve their virginity, without having vowed it, shall be reconciled after a year of penitence, if they wed their corrupters; the penitence is fixed at five years if they have known a number of men.” The council, in this article, which was reformed as being too indulgent by later councils, looks upon the loss of a virginity not consecrated to God as a violation of Christian marriage. According to the twenty-seventh Canon, a bishop or any other cleric might keep in his house his sister or his daughter, provided she was a virgin, but he might not keep a strange woman. The thirty-first Canon is very elastic and embraces all species of Prostitu-

tion; this Canon says that young people, who after baptism have fallen into the sin of impurity shall be admitted to communion after penitence and marriage. It is a far step from this Canon to the rule of St. Basil, who ordained four years of penitence for simple fornication, and that of Gregory of Nazianze, who extends his penitence to nine years. The moderation of the penalty of the council of Elvira is sufficient proof that this council does not date from later than the fifth century.

The forty-first Canon of this council has a direct bearing on the facts of Prostitution, for it exhorts the faithful not to suffer an idol in their houses, and to remain pure of idolatry in cases where they fear the violence of slaves through depriving the latter of their idols. Now these domestic idols were those of the little obscene gods who presided over the mysteries of love and generation. We have described elsewhere, after St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church, those impure divinities whom the ancients installed in their sleeping chambers and whom they adored while engaged in the labors of a lover or a husband. The god Subicus and the goddess Prema were most assuredly survivals of Jupiter the Thunderer and Venus the Victorious or the Armed Venus. The forty-fourth Canon of the council expressly ordains receiving into the communion of the faithful a woman who has been a prostitute and who afterwards marries a Christian (*meretrix quae aliquando fuerit et postea habuerit meritum*). Thus, the Church did not recognize the indelible brand of ignominy which Roman law attached to Prostitution. The sixty-third Canon excommunicates forever, a woman, who, pregnant as a result of adultery, shall do away with her young. The sixty-fourth Canon excommunicates in a parallel manner, women who shall have lived in adultery up to the time of their deaths. The sixty-seventh Canon forbids women, whether of the faithful or catechumans, under pain of excommunication, to have relations with either comedians or musicians. According to the sixty-ninth Canon, those, male or female, who shall have fallen a single time into adultery, shall do a penance of five years, and shall not be granted absolution before the end of that period ex-

cept in case of a mortal malady. The seventieth Canon makes a grave distinction in the matter of adultery and has to do with one of the most common circumstances of Prostitution: it orders that the wife who shall have committed adultery with the consent of her husband, shall be excommunicated, even on her deathbed; but it limits the penance to ten years, if this wife has been repudiated by her husband. Finally, the seventy-first Canon definitely excommunicates the corrupters of children (*stupratoribus buerorum*).

It might be said that the doctrine of the Church regarding Prostitution is to be found in the Canons of the council of Elvira, for no other council, up to that of Trent, enters into so many questions relative to this state of sin. In the following councils, we meet only with isolated articles, which merely repeat or complete those of the council of Elvira, for the majority of these councils were convoked in order to combat and condemn special heresies, which had to do with dogma rather than with morality. We may remark, nevertheless, in the acts of these different councils, Canons which contain details precious to the historian of manners. At the council of Neocaesarea, held in 314, it was decided that a man who, having the desire to commit sin with a woman, did not commit it, must have been preserved by the grace of God rather than restrained by his own virtue. At the council of Nicea in 325, in opposition to the heresy of the Valesians, who devoted all their zeal to making eunuchs in the name of God, the first Canon was made to declare that the man who had been made a eunuch, either by surgeons in case of illness, by barbarians or by heretics, might remain in the clergy, but that he who had mutilated himself, or had been mutilated with his own consent, could not remain a cleric. The majority of the clerics, being thus in jealous possession of their virility, the eighteenth Canon forbids them generally to have any woman in their houses except mothers, sisters, aunts or some old woman who could not be suspected of cohabitation. The council of Laodicea, held in 364, which dealt principally with the life of the clergy, forbade women, whoever they might be, from entering the sanctuary, and

this without any explanation as to the motive of the restriction, and with no exceptions. One Canon of the council of Nicea, the twenty-ninth, gives us a highly categorical account of the motives of this prohibition: *Ne mulier menstruata ingrediatur ecclesiam neque sumat sacram communionem, donec complentur dies illius mundationis et purificationis, quamvis sit in regum mulieribus.* Thus, the forbidding of the holy places to women during the more or less extended period of their natural purification was not even excepted in favor of queens and princesses. Since women were the sole judges in such cases, the Church found it more simple to make the prohibition definite and perpetual in order to prevent a sacrilege. The opinion of the Fathers of the Church regarding the feminine sex was only too well calculated to justify this exclusion from the sanctuary: "The bodies of holy women," one of their most eloquent advocates had said, "are veritable temples (*sanctarum feminarum corpora templa sunt*)."

But this is the manner in which one council characterized women in general: "The woman is the gate of Hell, the path of iniquity, the bite of the scorpion, an obnoxious species (*femina janua diaboli, via iniquitatis, scorpionis, percussio, nocivum tenus*)."

Woman's malice in all its baseness was manifested at the council of Tyre in the year 353, at which the Aryans indulged in a number of false denunciations against St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria. A woman of an evil life, known for her debaucheries (*muliercula libidinosa ac petulans*, says the Father Labee, following the best authorities), was introduced into the assembly of the Fathers of the council; she declared loudly that she had made a vow of virginity, and that Athanasius, by way of thanking her for the hospitality he had received of her, had so far forgotten himself as to make a violent attack upon her. Athanasius, accompanied by a priest named Timothy, was then brought in. He was interrogated as to the act of rape which had been imputed to him; he seemed not to hear and did not reply, as though he could not understand the questions which were addressed to him. But Timothy spoke for him and said gently: "I



have never been in your house, woman!" She, more impudent than ever, began to recriminate and to dispute with Timothy; she extended her hand and swore by a ring which she pretended she had received from Athanasius: "You have taken away my virginity," she exclaimed in an outburst of passion, "you have despoiled me of my purity!" She made use of terms and insults which only the meretrices were in the habit of employing, without Athanasius' deigning to refute these odious accusations. Finally, the Fathers of the council grew ashamed of the scandal and had the wretched creature who had outraged their modesty, led out. Athanasius, nevertheless, was condemned to twenty years of exile. The council then decided that the entering of houses where clergy dwelt, should be absolutely forbidden to women, no matter who they were. The council of Carthage, in the year 397, improved upon this prudent measure by ordering that the clerks and those who had made a vow of continence should not visit virgins or widows without the permission of a bishop or priest, and that, in any case, they should, out of prudence, go heavily chaperoned.

The conversion of sinful women was the constant preoccupation of the first Christians, and they chose out of preference, from the ranks of Prostitution, the penitent souls which they offered to God as a holocaust. But in this haste to make catechumens, the deacons only too often admitted impure women, who had not abjured their shameful mode of life, and who returned to sin, even as they left communion. The councils then came to demand guaranties of repentance and expiation before changing the courtezans into the brides of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine sums up on this point, the express doctrine of the councils by saying (*Lib. de fide et oper.*, Chapter XI), that no Church was to be found which would admit public women (*publicas meretrices*) to baptism before they had been freed from the defilements of their trade. In another place (*De octo ad dulcit. quaest.*), he says almost the same thing in the same terms (*nisi ab illa primitus prostitutione liberatas*). But once this reconciliation had been made in accordance with the prescribed form, once baptism

and communion had been received, a daughter of joy might become, in the sight of God, and the Christian who married her, as pure as a virgin, provided she retained none of the habits of her past life in the state of marriage. Such is the opinion of the council of Toledo in the year 750: *Licet fuerit meretrix, licet prostituta, licet multis corruptoribus exposita, si nuptiale incontaminatum foedus servaverit, prioris vitae maculas posterior munditia diluit.* The same council failed to recognize adultery prior to marriage, either for the man or the woman absolved by penitence, providing that all illicit relations preceding marriage were to be considered as an act of lust and not of adultery (*et quidem talis coitus luxuriae, sed non adulterii*). The conversion of women of an evil life was more frequent than any other conversions, for the courtesan was readily astonished at a rehabilitation which suddenly placed her on a footing with virgins and which promised her the refuge of marriage. But the Church merely effaced those sins of impurity which had been committed before baptism, while those which followed the sacrament left an indelible scar; no agent of Prostitution could be received into the clergy unless his defilement had been washed away by baptism. Tarisius, bishop of Constantinople, in a letter addressed to the Council of Nicea, in the year 787, says expressly that he has seen courtesans and debauchees absolved by penitence (*meretrices et publicanos receptos per poenitentiam*, says the translation of this letter, which was written in Greek); but if after baptism a man or woman had been taken in a flagrant act of Prostitution or adultery (*in scortatione aut adulterio*), he was no longer to be admitted to sacerdotal functions. Among the Fathers and the doctors, who labored particularly for the reconciliation of lost women, we shall cite a holy patriarch named Polemon, whom the ecclesiastical historians do the wrong of passing over in silence, but whose portrait made a number of similar conversions after his death. (See the *Collect. des conciles*, edited by Cossart, Volume VII, page 206, et seq.) St. Gregory of Nazianze has recounted, in beautiful Greek verse, a miracle of this sort, which

enjoyed much repute at the end of the fourth century. A young man, tormented by the demon of incontinence, called to a meretrix in front of a church, the door of which was open. This woman, running up to the young debauchee, perceived in the church a portrait of the venerable Polemon, whose eyes were fixed on her. At sight of this threatening portrait, she was troubled and fled with lowered head; the following day she was converted, and she died in the odor of sanctity. St. Basil, Bishop of Ancyra, glorifies in open council, this admirable portrait, which possessed so great virtue that the most hardened libertine could not gaze upon that holy face without blushing with shame and renouncing his incontinence: *ex illa patrata est, nisi enim vidisset scortum iconem Polemonis, nequaquam a stupro cessasset*. At the same council, St. Nicephorus, Bishop of Dyrrachium, stated that this marvelous image ought to be venerated by the faithful, since it possessed the power of preventing a daughter of joy from practicing her execrable trade (*quoniam potuit mulierculam liberare ab execrabili et turpi operatione*).

We might even believe, from certain passages in the Fathers and certain acts of the councils, that incontinence was formerly more ardent and irresistible than it is today. It is possible the vices and manners in antiquity had developed in man the faculty of succumbing to the prodigious abuses of virility; it is possible also that the excesses of Christian continence produced in some energetic natures a terrific revolt of the senses. St. Augustine, in his *Confessions*, has eloquently depicted the formidable struggles he had to endure against the demon of the flesh: "My heart was all inflamed and frothing with impudicity; it shook me greatly, broke its bonds and burst forth in debauchery (*et jactabar et effundebam, et ebulliebam per fornicationes meas*).” St. Jerome, in his *Epistle to Furia*, energetically depicts the sensual tempests of young libertines exalted by the fumes of wine and inflamed with good cheer: "*Non Aetnaei ignes,*" he says, "*non Vulcania tellus, non Vesuvius et Olympus tantis ardoribus aestuant, ut juveniles medullae vino plenae et dapibus inflammatae; nihil hic*

*inflammata corpora aut titillata membra genitalia, sicut indigestus cibus ructusque convulsus.*" The result, according to these ecclesiastical authorities, was that if one ate and drank with fury, one was all the more impatient for debauchery. The Church sought, then, to extinguish the fires of concupiscence by submitting them to the most frugal and sober régime; for it was not unaware how difficult it is to change in any manner the human temperament and the ideas and customs of the pagan world, which did not regard fornication either as bad in itself or as illicit (*simplicem fornicationem non esse per se malam neque illicitam*, says St. Augustine, *contra Faust*, II, Chapter 13). Outbursts of sensuality were so violent among the first Christians that sometimes they would go from the Church to the lupanar and there defile themselves by infamous relations with a courtesan after they had received the divine Body of Christ. This was that horrible adultery which the Church describes in these terms: *Infame meretricis et Christi corpus uno et eodem temporae contractare*.

The bishops, the deacons and the other servants of the altar did not always possess the strength to defend themselves against these defilements, and to adopt the beautiful expression of one council, they did not dare lay before God the impurity of their hands. The council of Carthage, in the year 390, recommended to priests and all others who administered the sacraments that they should be austere guardians of their own modesty, and that they should abstain from approaching their wives in case they were married (*pudicitiae custodes, etiam ab uxoribus se abstinere, ut in omnibus et ab omnibus pudicitia custodiatur, qui altari deserviunt*). It is probable that this continence of the conjugal couch was not prescribed to married priests, except at certain times when they had to administer the sacraments or touched the sacred vessels, for the Church did not prohibit the decent and moderate practice of the duties of marriage. The council of Gangre in Paphlagonia pronounced an anathema against anyone who cast a reflection on marriage, by saying that a woman cohabiting with a man could not be saved. The same council, while



recognizing the excellence of Christian virginity, did not want a woman to dress as a man under pretext of more easily preserving her continence in this apparel. The Church, however, did not refuse its children the means of escaping the occasions of sin; thus, at the agapes, which the *Apostolic Constitutions* called festivals of charity or of love (*caritas*), when the two sexes found themselves united, and when this carnal approach might have serious results under the exciting influence of gluttony, poor old women were invited and placed as salutary obstacles between the young of the two sexes (*Const. apost.*, I, II, Chapter 28). On the other hand, the Church, however severe it might be in maintaining chastity with the communion of the faithful, appears to have authorized, at least in the fifth century, any Christian layman to take a concubine, and thus to give satisfaction to his flesh, without exceeding the bounds of Christian marriage. The seventeenth Canon of the Council of Toledo, in the year 400, prescribes that the one who has a wife and a concubine at the same time, shall be excommunicated, but not the one who is content either with a transient wife, or with a permanent concubine in order to satisfy the needs of his temperament: *Qui non habet uxorem et pro uxore concubinam habet, a communione non repellatur; tantum ut unius mulieris aut uxoris aut concubinae (ut ei placuerit) sit conjunctione contentus.* The council of Rome, in the year 1059, still looked with accustomed eyes on concubine relations among the Christians, for the twelfth Canon of this council condemns only simultaneous cohabitation with a wife and a concubine. The Church tolerated, then, up to a certain point, illicit relations between a man and a woman who were not married, but who were united to each other by those bonds of mutual agreement which the Roman code had almost approved as legitimate. According to the spirit of Catholicism, adultery or fornication for the man began with the employment of two women, whoever they might be, intercourse thus with a number or a large number of men came to establish the degrees of Prostitution for the woman, who, according to the bizarre doctrine of a casuist of the

Middle Ages, could not be recognized as a meretrix until after she had faced twenty-three thousand different corrupters. According to other doctors, more reserved in their figures, the *meretricium* demanded only from forty to sixty experiences of the same nature, after which a case of public impurity was sufficiently well established in a woman, who incurred then the penitence assigned to prostitutes.

As to Prostitution itself, we do not see that the councils had attempted anything to cause it to disappear from the civil life of Christian society. They appear rather to have accepted it as a necessary evil, destined to obviate greater ones; they, nevertheless, avoided formulating on this point an opinion which would have given the lie to evangelical morality, by reconciling it with the organic laws of human civilization. St. Thomas touched indirectly on this delicate question when he remarked that man sought vainly to realize perfection in a world in which the Creator had permitted evil to have and to hold so great a place. This view of the existence of evil as an inevitable condition, essential to humanity, was an implicit admission of legal Prostitution. (See the *Collection des Conciles*, edited by Labbe, Vol. XII. Col. 1165.) The necessity of this Prostitution having been admitted by the ecclesiastical authority, the councils did not disdain to come to the aid of the secular authorities and to suggest to the latter the rules which would be the most efficacious in restraining the evil within proper limits and in dissimulating it to the eyes of decent folk. "One of the Fathers of the council of Bale," says a learned historian of Prostitution in the Middle Ages, M. Rabutaux, "in 1434, laid before the Fathers of that assembly, in a discourse in which he concerned himself with correcting the manners of his time, the principles which had inspired the legislation of the Middle Ages, representing these laws as the least impotent guardians of public decency." It is remarkable that the foresight represented by canonical legislation did not add a few salutary provisions to Roman jurisprudence, which still regulated the practice of Prostitution in a majority of the countries of Eu-

rope. One might say that the councils, in even occupying themselves with a police matter which was repugnant to them, had carefully evaded a pronouncement from the moral and religious point of view. We must, then, come down to the middle of the sixteenth century, in order to meet in the Acts of the councils, an article which evidences the system of toleration which the Church had adopted regarding Prostitution, looked upon as an institution of public utility. This article, despite its date, which is recent enough, may go to establish the true state of neutrality which the Church had desired to preserve on this important social question. It was at the council of Milan under the episcopacy of St. Charles Borromée, that the Fathers of the council introduced into the texts of those *Constitutions* which they had sanctioned, a paragraph specially affecting meretrices and lenons (tit. 65, *De meretricibus et lenonibus*). Following is a translation of this section, which reflects the jurisprudence of Theodosius and of Justinian, under the auspices of the bishops, the princes and magistrates of each country and each city in Christendom:

“In order that the meretrices may be wholly distinct from decent women, the bishops shall see to it that they are clad in public in some form of habit which shall make known their shameful condition and their mode of life. They shall not be permitted, in case they are strangers in the locality, to pass the night in the wine-shops or in the inns (*in meritoriis tabernis vel publicis cauponis*), at least when the route they are taking does not authorize such a stop, in which case, they shall remain but a single day. In each city, the bishop shall take care to assign to these impure creatures a place of sojourn, far from the cathedrals and the frequented quarters, in which place it shall be permitted them to dwell altogether with this provision, that if they take up their domicile outside of that place, and that if they reside for more than a single day in any other house of the city for any cause whatsoever, they shall be severely punished, as well as the masters or tenants of the house in which they shall have so sojourned. This police measure is especially recommended to the enlightened piety of

princes and magistrates. It is to them also that we address ourselves, urging them to forbid women of an evil life the use of precious stones, of gold, of silver, and of silken vestments. It is of them that we demand, above all, the expulsion of all those infamous ones who practice the trade of procurer (*omnes qui lenocinio quaestim faciunt*).” We have reported in its entirety this section from the *Constitutions* of the council of Milan, for the reason that it is unique in the history of councils, and that it shows us the ecclesiastical power in perfect accord with the legal power in organizing, regulating and repressing public Prostitution, without destroying it and even without branding it with an anathema.





## CHAPTER VII

THE ecclesiastical authority, which made its pronouncements through the voices of councils and the writings of the Fathers, however tolerant it may have been toward legal Prostitution, that imperious infirmity of the body, social and political, still sought to extinguish it and to destroy the causes, with a zeal and a severity which never relented. Among the more or less immediate causes to which Christianity had directed the aversion of the faithful, we must cite in the first rank the games of the circus and theatrical performances, which included dances, pantomime and profane music. We have already spoken of the obscenity of these dances and pantomimes; we have said that the circus and the theatre were but vestibules of the lupanar; we have indicated the true trade of the flute-players, the *citharoedes*, the players of the psalterion, the dancers and *saltatrices*; but the subject has been barely touched in a small number of passages in which we see but one of its faces, and we are unable to refrain from coming back to it here with more details, in order to obtain a glimpse of the terrible foyer of Prostitution which the Christian Church sought to wipe out or at least to limit. It is incontestable that the theatre among the Greeks and Romans had a bad effect upon public manners and opened, so to speak, a permanent school of Prostitution. We shall be better able to explain the stubbornness of the doctors of the Church toward the theatre and toward everything which had to do with it, when we take account of the profound immoralization engendered and developed by the passion for the theatre in pagan society, which hurled itself, without rule and without bridle, into the pursuit of sensual pleasures.

Although polytheism played, certainly, a great part in the creation of the ancient theatre, although mythology was incarnated in the popular dramas of Greece and Italy, although tragedy, in

its origin, was but a form of the religious mysteries, the Church undoubtedly would have pardoned the tragic and lyrical works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the theatre which we call heroic would have found grace in the face of the most rigorous censorship; but as a result of the relaxation of manners, at the period when Christianity was endeavoring to found itself upon the basis of morality, tragedy, that old and chaste muse who formerly had taught virtue to a people capable of being moved with admiration and respect, tragedy at this epoch appeared to have descended from its tripod and to have been banished from the temple; it had been replaced by comedy, that mad and libertine muse who, under pretext of correcting vices, amused itself by painting them under the most engaging colors, and which brazenly placed upon the stage those turpitudes commonly hidden in the bosom of families and of hearts. The satiric school of Aristophanes and of Eupolis, while permitting itself many indecencies in language, had, above all, awakened the malice of the spectators, rather than their libertinism; the joyous and pleasant school of Menander and of Plautus had brought at once laughter and reflection to an enlightened public, which took pleasure in the performance of these comic masterpieces; but neither Menander nor Philemon nor Plautus nor their disciples and imitators were longer preoccupied with that decency which comedy appeared to have possessed in the past, but abandoned themselves, on the contrary, to all the license of their imaginations, to all the petulancy of their minds, without fearing to offend the eyes and ears of their auditors. Their object may have been, by exposing pictures filled with daring and crudity, to bring a blush as in the presence of a mirror to the models of these cynical and shameful paintings; they were not careful in the expressions which they employed to describe the ridiculous amours of old men, the passions and the follies of youth, the baseness of parasites, the avidity of usurers, the perfidy of valets, the infamies of slave-merchants and lenons or the ruses and artifices of courtezans. This tribe, moreover, spoke their own language in the theatre, and the fear of scandal never restrained an indecent bon

not from the pen of a comic poet. Never either was the frenzied applause of the mob lacking for these immodest trivialities.

And yet, Christian rigidity would undoubtedly have relaxed in view of the literary esteem which the great Greek and Latin comics had acquired in spite of their licentious images and immoral precepts; but this high comedy, which still admitted only scenes borrowed from the intimate life of courtezans, had become, so to speak, even more prostituted than these latter and had ended by degenerating into the mimes and the atellanae. The Church of Jesus Christ could not at once preach chastity and permit the theatre to exist in the presence of the evangelic seat. The ruin of the theatre was then determined, like that of the pagan temples, but the temples did not hold out so long as the theatre. Even tragedy found itself included in this proscription, which struck indifferently at all sorts of spectacles, all sorts of actors, all sorts of profane divertissements. The ecclesiastical law was in accord with the Roman law on this point, by inflicting a certain infamy on those who took part in theatrical representations; moreover, it declared such persons excluded from its communion, and it treated with no less rigor those poets and musicians who lent their aid to *theatrical impudicity*. It was not probably to the theatre itself that the Fathers of the Church felt a need of addressing these recruits; it was rather to its works of impiety and corruption that they opposed a barrier which for a long time rendered impotent divertissements of this character. Thus, in the anathemas which Tertullian, Lactantius, St. Cyprian and other Fathers hurl against the theatre, there is not even an allusion to those fetes of Bacchus which were the cradle of the dramatic art, and in the course of which a choir of Fauns and bacchantes, besmeared with wine-lees and garlanded with vine leaves, sang lascivious songs and danced about the obscene images which they bore in triumph. The ancient Greeks had judged their own comedy as severely as the Fathers of the Church were to do later, for they called it an elegant and facetious courtesan (*meretricula elegans et faceta*, says the Jesuit Boulanger, in his



book *De Theatro*); St. Cyprian calls it a school of impurity, St. Jerome an arsenal of Prostitution.

But we are not concerned here with collecting all the accusations, all the griefs of the Church against the theatre, whatever their nature may be; we desire merely to show the excesses of scandal and obscenity which decided the Christian bishops to condemn without distinction everything that belonged to the pagan theatre. At the beginning of this canonical persecution, the object of which was to pursue impurity in the works of the theatrical demon, the public taste no longer took pleasure in performances of high comedy; Aristophanes, Menander, Eupolis, Plautus and the principal comic authors of Athens and of Rome figured less frequently on the stage than they did in libraries. It was to the latter place that the rigors of Catholic anathema went to seek them out, and a deplorable religious zeal was displayed in the destruction of all these gay poetic masterpieces to which Greek and Roman manners had given a licentious varnish. It was the courtezans, the procuresses, the cinaedi, the debauchees, who caused the loss of so many fine pieces which these indecent personages filled with their ugly portraits and their crapulous doctrines. That is why there have come down to us only formless fragments of Menander, who had composed one hundred and ten comedies and who had surpassed himself in painting the picture of Prostitution. We have even less of Philemon, of Eupolis and the other Greek comics condemned by the freedom of their pleasantries and the audacity of their brushes to be burned without absolution. Plautus would have perished like Menander, whom he imitated, if a happy accident had not preserved a score of his comedies, which gave us an idea of that Greek comedy which was devoted to the history of courtezans and their amours, as tragedy had been to the history of the gods and of heroes. As to Aristophanes, it would be difficult to say why he has almost entirely survived the systematic annihilation of the works of the theatre; if he has been spared, despite the abominable license of his dialogue, we may suppose with some appearance of probability that the Fathers of the Church were not averse to proving that a pagan

poet had put upon the stage the gods and goddesses of paganism, at the same time fustigating them with satire, covering them with mud and expectorating upon them. Lucian owes to a similar motive the preservation of his works entire, despite the obscenities which cause them to be placed upon the index of the Christian Church.

That Church, which did not pardon the written monuments of theatrical license, was more indulgent toward the authors of or the accomplices in these theatrical disorders. Whoever stepped upon the stage acquired an indelible brand according to the Roman law; but this brand was effaced in the communion of Christians, if the repentant actor abjured his ignominious calling. "If any comedian," say the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VIII, Chapter 32), "is received into the bosom of the Church whether it be a man or a woman, a jockey of the circus, a gladiator, a runner, a director of the theatre, an athlete, a chorister, a harp or lyre player, an equillibrist or a master of mountebanks, he must renounce his trade or be excluded from the communion of the faithful." This excommunication, as we have already said, weighed equally on all sinners who lived by the theatre, even though they were not all equally blameworthy; but in the eyes of the Fathers, the theatre, of whatever nature, was the domain of lust and obscenity: *Theatra luxuriant*, said St. Jerome (*Epist. ad Marcel*): "The theatres engender lust." Tertullian, in his book on the heresy of Marcion, denounced the criminal pleasures of the circus and its fury, the orchestra and its vertigo, and the theatre and its license (*voluptates circi furentis, caveae insanientis, scenae lascivientis*). We have seen what took place in a great circus of Rome, at the fete of the Florales, where the presence of Cato prevented the people from giving the signal for the hideous spectacle. Despite Cato, despite the admonitions of the philosophers, despite the edicts of the consuls, the Florales continued to be celebrated in the same manner; and Lactantius, who describes them (Book I, Chapter 20), gives us sufficient evidence as to the difficulties which Christianity encountered in depriving the pagan populace of its ignoble pleasures. "Beyond the license of words,

which burst forth in a torrent of obscenity," says the holy author of the *Divine Institutions*, "the meretrices, to the impatient cries of the spectators, are despoiled of their vestments. It is those who on that day are charged with the office of the mimes, and under the eyes of all the people, until the immodest glances of the latter are assuaged, they execute their infamous movements (*cum pudendis motibus detinentur*)." Arnobius, who also recounts these incredible scandals, thinks that the courtesan Flora herself would have beat a shamed retreat, like that of Cato, if she could have seen the abominations which were celebrated in her honor, and which merely transported the lupanars to the theatres (*si suis in ludis flagitiosas compexerit res agi et migratum ab lupanarides in theatra*). If the Roman Florales still took place in the third century of the Christian era, we may judge from that how great was the obscenity of those theatrical performances to which the Catholic Church was already victoriously opposing its preachings and its abstinences.

Comedy in a toga, *togata*, was addressed only to cultivated minds, and, as a consequence, to but a small number; St. Cyprian, in his 103rd *Epistle*, condemns no less the elements of Greek and Latin comedy, the intrigues of characters, the deceits of adulterers, the immodesty of women, the ridiculous buffoons, the shameful parasites and those fathers of families, those patricians, sometimes simpletons and sometimes obscene: "All the actors," he says with indignation, "whether they are playing a sacred or profane subject merely stir up the mud of the theatre, not only because the pieces they play are indecent, but because their movements and their gestures are immodest, because often the acts of Prostitution are translated upon the stage, and because Prostitution is practiced at the same time under the stage (*actores omnes, cum sacri tum profani, spurciliam scenae exagitant, non modo quod fabulae obscenae in scena agerentur, sed etiam quod motus, gestusque essent impudici, atque adeo prostibula ipsa in scenam saepe venirent et sub scena prostarent*)."

We have, as a matter of fact, taking the statements of the erotic poets, painted already that Prostitution which took place in the

theatres and the circuses, and which set up its impure markets at the gates, in the environs of the public places, and even under the vaults (*fornices*) of the edifice where the games were celebrated. This single fact shows us clearly enough what part Prostitution played in the customs of the theatre. It is true that decent women, mothers and matrons, assisted but rarely at the performances; but the lenons, male and female, the famous courtezans and the popular meretrices, the cinaedi and the spadones, had a free field, and each of these classes profited from the sensual instigations inseparable from the theatric games, in order to carry on their despicable trades. The proscenium of the theatre was especially reserved for young courtezans addicted to the most disgusting debauchery. Plautus, in the prologue to his *Poenulus* desires to expel them from the proscenium: *Scortum exoletum ne quis in proscenio sedeat*. In the most conspicuous seats were to be seen foreign women of fashion, wearers of the mitre, who would send their emissaries to await, receive or solicit, here and there, an offer or a proposition. The highest seats were reserved for the dregs of Prostitution who scattered themselves in the vomitories, and who soiled with their impurities the vast and somber substructions of the theatre or the amphitheatre. These included not merely meretrices, but also children who had been sold into debauchery and who prostituted themselves in the bad houses which, so to speak, were annexed to these spectacles. The Jesuit Boulanger says so expressly, in his treatise, *De Circo Romano*, and he does not seek to conceal the execrable destination of the theatric arches: *Certe ad omnia pene guimnasia et spectacula, erant popinae et ganeae utrique veneri masculae et femineae*. We may suppose, from a number of passages in the book of Maccabees, that the ignoble sanctuaries of the male Venus were called in Greek and Latin *ephebia*. Christianity, in order to accomplish the closing of the *ephebiae* and the annihilation of their detestable manners, did not care to leave a single theatre standing.

Both spectators and actors, then, strove to see how immodest they could be, but the most brazen comedy was chaste beside the



pantomimes and the mimes, which seemed only to have been invented in order to serve as auxiliaries to Prostitution. Among the Greeks, theatrical performances, sometimes mute and translated into gestures, sometimes rendered into dialogue and spoken, sometimes sung and danced, derived from the rustic fetes which had been instituted in honor of Bacchus, Pan, Flora and the rural divinities. It was no longer a case of phallic hymns, repeated in chorus by drunken peasants as they leaped about their half-emptied amphorae, while others with cords agitated certain obscene images (*oscilla*), suspended by pins and receiving, from the movement which was communicated to them, the most licentious forms and aspects. The phallic chants undoubtedly have been perpetuated in the villages of Attica, where the joyous chariot of Thespis still went its bacchanalian way. But this gross spectacle had taken on, in the cities, a more theatric character, without losing anything of its primitive obscenity. Such was the original *diceliae*, the *magodiae* and the *mimes*. The players in the *diceliae* whom the Sicyonians called *phallophores*, never showed themselves on the stage except adorned with the attributes of Priapus, of the god Termes, of Pan and the Satyrs who presided at these gay and popular debaucheries; but all their buffooneries did not come from that. As to the *magodiae*, the actors, who, Athenaeus designates under the name of *magodes*, dressed like women or debauchees, whose emblematic sign was an upright stick, called *areskos*; they played the roles of drunkards and grotesque villagers, and expressed themselves by gestures and grimaces. In the mimes, on the contrary, mountebanks added to these indecent grimaces and gestures infamous songs and dialogues not less indecent. The mimes passed to Rome and were accompanied by all the voluptuous accessories of dance and of music. The buffoons, who played in the street-corner comedies, had shaved heads, and wore, along with flat shoes, a variegated habit like that of the prostitutes of low degree. The pantomimes, which did not have recourse to the petulant vivacity of dialogue, employed the prodigious resources of the mimetic art in order to place upon the stage the most obscene

episodes of mythology. Finally, the atellanae, which were called frequently the satiric verve of Aristophanes, and which attacked various persons by loudly assailing their vices and defects, did not disdain to amass their bons mots from the slough of Prostitution. These atellanae, originally of Atella, a city of Orca, were the national comedy of Italy, and preserved more than one tradition of the forms and lupercales.

The mythologic pantomimes were always those which spoke the loudest to the senses of the spectators. Long before they had dared appear upon the stage, they were the delight of the comestiones, and of the nights of Greece as well as of Rome. Xenophon, in his *Banquet*, has described one of these pantomimes, which, although free enough, will not give even an idea of what this species of spectacle later became, when it had passed from the festival hall to a theatric light of day. A certain Syracusan, master of pantomime, announces in these terms what he has to offer to the guests: "Citizens, here is Ariadne who is about to enter the nuptial chamber; Bacchus, who has been committing a little debauchery with the gods, will come to find her, and both will plunge into drunken pleasure. . . . We see Ariadne enter, clad in the habits of a bride; she sits, pensive and trembling. Bacchus appears in the costume of a god walking to the rhythm of those airs of triumph which were sacred to the solemn festivals. Ariadne indicates by her gestures how charmed she is at the arrival of her bridegroom. But she is careful not to anticipate him; she does not quit her place, but her heaving bosom, her blushing cheeks, her trembling body, all betray her emotion. Bacchus perceives her suddenly and comes toward her with a passionate movement." The pantomime expresses clearly, however unchastely, what words do not dare to say, and it supplies, in a manner, the language of the gods. We may without difficulty imagine what the fable of Pasiphae was like, that of Leda, that of Ixion and others equally monstrous, interpreted by this pantomime, which studied to be as faithful as it was eloquent. Ordinarily the feminine roles were taken by young lads who, to employ the energetic expression of St. Jerome, had been broken in

from infancy to this feminine trade: "*In scenis theatralibus*," says St. Jerome, "*unus atque indem histrio nunc mollis in venere frangitur, nunc tremulus in Cybele*." We may understand how, at the sight of these impure gesticulations (*impuris motibus scenicorum*), as St. Augustine says in his *City of God*, those who preserved a remnant of modesty would turn away blushing; but they learned, nevertheless, in this school of lubricity, those hideous debaucheries which they later endeavored to imitate, if not to surpass.

There were, however, comediennes, although the majority of feminine roles were given to men, in order still more to excite the passions of the most depraved. These comediennes, whatever may have been their employment upon the stage, were even more despised than the actors, and, to this brand of infamy was added the mark of immodesty, however decent they might have been otherwise. They had need, the truth is, of forgetting the modesty of their sex in order to lend themselves to the impure service of their profession. Procopus, in his history, has drawn the portrait of a courtesan of the theatre, whom this indecent art had rendered as famous as her beauty. This portrait, drawn after nature in the sixth century, will show us how at that epoch, despite the constant efforts of the Christian Church, the theatre had not yet submitted to a moral reform demanded by all the doctors and bishops: "As soon as she had attained the age of puberty, although born of free condition, she desired to be registered among those women who prostituted themselves upon the stage. She became thus a meretrix of the theatre, like those unfortunate ones who are called *pedaneae*, for the reason that they go to seek their fortune at the feasts without bringing along any musical instruments, or rather, because they make their bed upon the earth when they yield to their gross assailants (*quia ad terram se subigendas moechis substernerent*, is the translation of the Jesuit Boulanger); for she had neither flute nor harp; she had not even learned to dance in the orchestra; but she sold her person to all she met, making a traffic of all parts of her body. Finally, she offered her assistance to the mimes, for whatever work was to be

done in the theatre, and, becoming the companion of buffoons and grotesques, she took part in their theatric labors and played her role in the performances. Sometimes she appeared altogether naked in the eyes of the people, and she would remain in this state of nudity, in the middle of the stage, without any other vestment than a light veil about her loins (*bouthonas diazoma echousa monon*)."

This impudent nudity, these obscene gestures, these disgusting pantomimes serve only too well to confirm the rigorous judgment of Tertullian upon the theatre in general and upon the sorry victims of public debauchery (*publicae libidinas hostiae*) in particular: "Those executioners of their own modesty blush at least once a year for the horrible prostitutions which they bring to the light of day, and by which the people are frequently terrified!" St. Basil adds a last brush stroke to the frightful picture which the Fathers of the Church have drawn of theatrical impurity, by making us acquainted with the conduct of the spectators during the performance of the pantomimes. "The orchestra, which abounds in immodest spectacles," he says in his fourth homily *ad Examer.*, "is a public and common school of impudicity for all who sit there, and the sound of the flutes and the dissolute songs which lay hold of the souls of the auditors have no other end than to bring madness to all those insensate ones who give themselves over to debauchery, and who may be seen beating time with the citheraedes and the flute-players." The Greek in this singular passage is so expressive that we have not succeeded in translating it into French as literally as the Jesuit Boulanger has done it into Latin: *Orchestra, quoe abundat spectaculis impudicis publica et communis schola impudicitae iis qui assident, et tiliarum cantus et cantica meretricia insidentia audientium animis, nihil aliud persuadent, quan ut omnes foeditati studeant et imitentur citharistarum aut tibicinum pulsus.* Moreover, the Fathers, in condemning the turpitudes of the theatre, made no scruple about depicting them and describing them without reticence; Arnobius speaks of those crispations of the loins (*clunibus crispatis*) which he could not look upon with calmness; St.



Cyprian says that pantomime is the art of expressing with the hands whatever obscenity there is in the fables of mythology. Lactantius affirms that this theatrical pantomime was composed especially of gestures and poses by means of which the dancers imitated all the nuances of pleasure (*impudici gestus, quibus infames feminae imitantur libidines quas saltando exprimunt*); Salvianus declares that it would take too long to enumerate these imitations of shameful things, all the obscenities of words and consonances, all the turpitudes of movement, all the filthiness of gesture. The Fathers, although Christians, grew indignant at seeing the gods and goddesses of paganism consigned to the ignoble masquerades and the atrocious profanations of the pantomimes; Arnobius is astonished that one should dare to make of Venus a vile courtesan and a frightful bacchante, even in Rome where Venus had so many temples and statues, being as it were the grandmother of the Roman people (*saltatur Venus et per affectus omnes meretriciae vilitatis impudica exprimitur imitatione bacchari*).

Christianity, in proscribing all the theatrical games, had less in view comedy than it did the dance, with which it connected all sorts of Prostitution. "The dance," as Lucian says, in his dialogue on this voluptuous art, "Goes back to the cradle of the world and was born with love." Lucian reports, on this subject, a Bithynian fable which would have it that Priapus, charged with the education of the infant Mars, had completed that education by means of the dance rather than by military exercises, in order to develop at once the physical forces and the bellicose character of his pupil. That is why, according to the moral of this allegorical fable, the tenth part of Mars' spoils in war always go to the profit of Priapus. The Fathers of the Church did not find in this war-like origin an absolution for the erotic dance. The truth is for a long time, the Pyrrhic and other martial measures were no longer danced, those measures which had once exalted the courage of Lacadaemonia and which had intoxicated Greece with the sound of its own bucklers; the religious dances in themselves appeared cold and mute. But everywhere, in

the theaters, in the gymnasia, at the feasts, lascivious dances and mythological pantomimes had been introduced. This was a furore with the old men, as well as with the young; neither grew tired of watching the antics of the dancers from the rising to the setting of the sun (*ab orto sole ad occasum*, says the translation of St. Basil, Hom. IV., *ad Examer.*) These dances excited a sort of delirium in the ranks of the spectators, who, even though they may have been bald and may have worn a long white beard, nevertheless beat time upon their seats and gave vent to shameful acclamations, in applauding the dancers, those vile histrions of impudicity, those degraded men and lost women, branded by the Roman law with the scourge of infamy. It is thus that Lucian pictures for us an old philosopher among the courtezans and debauchees, shaking his white head and trembling with pleasure at the sight of a wretched effeminate, unworthy of the name of man. "You are going to take your place in the orchestra," says Crato, to his ward Lucian, "in order to intoxicate your ears with song and with the sound of the flute and to charm your eyes with the sight an infamous one, who, clad in the habits of luxury and obedient to lascivious melodies, imitates, in all their excesses, the passions of certain shameless women, like Phaedra, Parthenope, Rhodopis, gesticulating all the while to the dying sounds of the lyre, and to the noise of feet which mark the cadence!" Lucian, who takes sides with the dance, and who proclaims it useful as well as agreeable, still cannot refrain from speaking of the *gymnopediae* and other Greek dances, in which nude virgins and children took part: "The dance," he says, "must paint manners and passions *au vif* . . . The dance has no limitations; it embraces everything; it is a spectacle which unites all the others, as well as instruments, rhythm, measure, voices and choir." Thus may be explained the supreme influence which such an art exercised over senses which were always prepared for pleasure; thus may be explained, at the same time, the reasons of the Christian bishops in so endeavoring to stifle the irresistible seductions of the dance.

It would take too long to cite here all the different varieties of theatrical or convivial dances which solicited the severe vigilance of the Church, and which appeared to the latter as bearing the special mark of Prostitution; we have already indicated more particularly those which recall some mythologic fact concerning the loves of Olympus. The best known and least decent were the dances of Venus, the *Aphrodite*, a sort of licentious epic, composed of a horde of pantomimic scenes, accompanied by obscene chants and intoxicating music. The entire history of Venus and her innumerable adulteries was reproduced with an impure verity, which led the poet of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Art of Love*, the voluptuous Ovid, to blush at finding his verses translated into erotic movements, gestures and postures. *Scribere si fas est imitantes turpia mimos*, he remarked, astonished at the license of such tableaux. Athenaeus gives us the names of a certain number of dances of the same sort, which he does not describe, but which he characterizes as being more or less indecent. Such were the *Epiphallos*, which descended in direct line from the Phallic fetes and games; the *Hedion* and the *Heducomos*, which were dances mingled with lubricious songs; the *Brydalica*, originally of Laconia, and which was danced by women who wore ridiculous and monstrously indecent masks; the *Lamptrotera* in which the dancers, utterly nude, provoked one another by libertine remarks; the *Strobilos*, or the hurricane, which raised the robes of the actors above their heads; the *Kidaris*, or the hap, an immodest dance of the Arcadians; the *Apokinos*, which consisted in a prodigious shaking of the haunches;\* the *Sybaritike*, which completely justified its name; the *Mothon*, or the slave, which permitted many liberties; the *Ricnoustai* and *Diaricnoustai*, which included many shakings and titillations of the body, etc. The savant Meursius has composed a volume of dissertations on the dances of the Greeks, and he is far from having exhausted this delicate subject, in so far as the dances of love are concerned.

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\*Cf. Some of our modern jazz dances: the "shimmy," etc.

The Romans had improved still further on the luxury and impudence of these dances, which were produced without veils in the theaters, and which daily favored the corruption of manners. Each dancer, each danseuse, who was in the vogue, invented his own dances and gave them his own names; it is thus that Bathylle, Pylade, Phabaton, and other celebrated pantomime artists became the creators of various dances which yielded nothing in point of lasciviousness to those of Greece and Egypt. But the dance most esteemed in Rome, and the one which best reflected the Romans, was the *Cordace*, which owed its success to a marvelous shaking of the loins and buttocks. Seneca complains of the fact that this libidinous dance had been introduced on the stage (*Nat. Quaest.*, I., I., Chapter 16). It would appear, from the etymology of this Greek dance that the first dancers were in the habit of suspending themselves from a cable and balancing themselves in the air with a thousand clownish and indecent postures. This was a traditional souvenir of those *oscilla*, which were a feature of the fetes of Bacchus, and which sometimes assumed singular forms.

Nearly all the theatrical dances demanded an incredible agility of body and an extraordinary suppleness on the part of the bodily members. The dancers were all, more or less, equilibrists and funambulists. In the *Banquet* of Xenophon, we behold a little danseuse who makes a backward wheel by bringing her hands to her head, while a buffoon makes the same wheel in the opposite direction to the sounds of the double flute. The dancers made so many disorderly movements that they sometimes would drop from lassitude as a result of their exertions. From the highest antiquity, these dancers were nude, some laden with indecent amulets, others smeared with cumen or saffron, some simulating the feminine sex, others augmenting the proportions of their own sex, all with the head and neck shaved, many coiffured with the petasus as a sign of their effeminate manners. This customary nudity of the coryphees of the dance added particularly to its shameful character. A fresco of Herculaneum represents an infantile dancer of the feminine sex, wholly nude, doing her



turns in the hand of a male flute-player, who is seated at the foot of a festal couch where two guests are becoming mutually thrilled at the sight of this lubricious spectacle. Suidas mentions another nude dance, in which the actors suspended from their loins, or even from their necks, enormous red-colored kidneys having the aspect of the *oscilla*, and taking on, at each movement of the dance, an immodest physiognomy. (See the passage of Suidas, in the *Treatise on the Theatre*, by Boulanger, I., I., Chapter 52).

It is wholly natural that the mercenaries who lent themselves to such sports of Prostitution should have been branded and included in the class of meretrices and cinaedi. Thus, in the first centuries of the Latin theater, the actors who so exposed themselves to public contempt, were not only excluded from the rank of citizen, but might also be driven out of Rome by order of the censors. At this period of censorial modesty, a man was not permitted on the stage in the habit of a woman, and the difference in sex on the part of the actor was established in the eyes of the spectator only by the special character of the theatric mask. But notwithstanding the decisions of the magistrates, theatric immorality had broken all bounds, and Prostitution had been installed as the queen of these impure assemblages. With certain exceptions, determined by the talent of the individual actor and his character as a man, everyone who took part upon the stage was infamous. The applause of the populace merely consecrated this infamy. Among the actors were to be found only eunuchs, cinaedi, patients, spadones and other accomplices of debauchery against nature. Among the actresses were but prostitutes and others of their kind. Arnobius expresses himself on this point with an energy which a most exact translation cannot equal; he is speaking of the corrupting effects of music and pantomime: "These women," he says, "become prostitutes, harp players, and musicians of other sorts in order to give their bodies to an ignoble traffic and advertise their ignominy in front of a populace which is their own property; they are prompt to hurl themselves into the lupanars or to seek adventure under the vaults

of the theater, refusing no impurity and offering their mouths for purposes of debauchery: *In feminis fierent meretrices, sambucistriae, psaltriae, venatiae ut prosternerent corpora, vilitatem sui populo publicarent, in lupanaribus promptae, in fornicibus obviae, nihil pati renuentes, ad oris stuprum paratae.*" And yet, it was among these dishonored women that Christianity recruited its martyrs and its saints.

The founders of Christianity had sensed the necessity of openly attacking the pagan theater in order to accomplish a reform of manners; they united all their forces, all their authority, all their eloquence against this formidable enemy, which defended itself with the powerful arms of sensuality, of pleasure, and of Prostitution; but for more than six centuries the theater sustained these assaults, and it was not overthrown until after the last altars of polytheism had fallen. Prostitution, however, was not crushed in the debris.



## CHAPTER VIII

**I**T REMAINS for us to examine the influence which Christianity exercised over Roman jurisprudence and the decrees of the emperors from the point of view of Prostitution. This notable influence, emanating from the councils, did not depart from the doctrine of those councils, and all the Christian emperors, from Constantine to Justinian, applied themselves to restraining Prostitution within the narrowest limits, under the closest surveillance, without endeavoring to suppress it entirely and thereby compromise the security of social life. There is no doubt, then, that the emperors had been directed in this work by the enlightened reason of the Fathers of the Church, who admitted the existence of Prostitution in the State as a necessary and incurable evil, as a wound which was not to be cicatrized, but merely restrained and dissimulated. But on the other hand, in accordance with the same system, they sought to destroy the evil in principle, by setting up the most rigorous penalties for all the acts of *lenocinium*. We may thus sum up the object of Christianity in its reform of public manners by imperial legislation; to stop the progress of Prostitution, to diminish and circumscribe its domain, by removing all the impure parasites, leaving Prostitution to exist in the shadow of contempt, for the use of a few perverse beings, in the effort to render it, if possible, still more shameful and degrading by placing between it and decent life a line of demarcation as deep and well-marked as possible.

But before taking up what we shall call the Christian policing of Prostitution under Constantine and his successors, we must first treat of a related subject and one which deserves to be studied in itself. We wish to speak of the vectigal, or lustral tax, which prostitutes in the Roman empire paid from the time of the reign



of Caligula, who had established this tax. It is a remarkable fact that this scandalous vectigal reared on the basis of social depravation, continued to exist to the time of Anastasius I., and that the Christian emperors prior to this Prince consented to soil their hands by taking gold from this immoral source. It is true that they appear to have desired to purify this infamous gold by devoting it to pious and useful foundations, among which we find the establishment of a house of refuge or of penitence for prostitutes. The tax on Prostitution in antiquity is a fact all the more interesting for the reason that we see it reappearing in more regular and less arbitrary forms in modern times under a regime which is supposed to be founded on morality and religion.

The Romans gave the name of *vectigal* to every species of impost drawn (*vectus*) from the substance of the people who contributed it. Everything was a suitable object of taxation; but it does not appear that Prostitution had been taxed before the time of Caligula, who ordered that each prostitute should pay into the treasury the eighth part of her daily gains (*ex capturis*), which tended to produce a proportional levy and one which rose or fell with Prostitution. We do not accept, however, the distinction which Torrentius, the learned commentator of Suetonius, believes to have been established between the night work and day work of prostitutes, by saying that only those who work by day were put in the same class with street porters and were subject to the imperial tax. The word *captura* does not bear out this distinction, which is much too subtle, and Caligula was not so innocent as to deprive himself thus of the best part of his parnabolic revenues. This was not all; Caligula, in order to augment still further the product of this obscene vectigal, decreed that all men or women who had exercised the meretricium or the lenocinium should contribute to it; but Suetonius does not inform us what was the precise nature of this law, which, undoubtedly was not fixed or permanent, since marriages were also affected by a law of the same sort (*nec non et matrimonia obnixia essent*). The object of this tax was certainly not to moderate the abuses of Prostitution by rendering them more onerous. It

was, on the contrary, a *prima facie* guaranty of tolerance on the part of the authorities toward the agents of public depravation. It is a far step from this to the prohibitive laws of Tiberius, who exiled or deported patrician prostitutes and equestrian debauchees, in order to punish the former by having sought registration on the lists of courtezans and the second for having dared to appear on the stage or in the arena. The tax established by Caligula was not abolished until following reigns, but the assessment and the form were charged a number of times, in order to make it produce still more and to render subject to it as large a number of persons as possible.

We have seen that the execrable Heliogabalus in order to increase the products of Prostitution, had conceived the idea of opening lupanars in the palace itself and of raising arbitrarily the prices in these imperial lupanars, to which came matrons and Roman knights, anxious to increase the revenues of Caesar. But the tax on meretrices was no longer standardized and the collectors charged with raising it would fix the amount according to their own caprices, or according to the fortunes of the individuals concerned. Xiphilinus employs a Greek word, similar to the *captura* of Suetonius, in describing the lupanars of Heliogabalus: *chremata te par auton sonelege kai egaouronto tais empolais*. The tax on Prostitution, the meretricium, included levies of all sorts on anyone who made a profession of debauchery, whatever his sex, age or rank might be; the lenons, male and female, were not overlooked in this arbitrary contribution, and the children brought in larger revenues than the women did, because they were more numerous. This shameful impost, in order to avoid confusion with the other *vectigalia*, of all sorts which crushed the respectable population, was disguised from then on under the name of *aurum lustrale*, either from the idea that the tax was in the character of an expiation or equivalent to a purification for an obscene deed, or, what is more likely, by allusion to the intention of the tax itself, which was especially directed toward those lupanars known as *lustra*. The raising of this tax must have been very difficult, and the collectors in charge

must have been armed with a sort of authority to enable them to overcome the ill-will of the degraded creatures placed under their surveillance. Otherwise, it is certain that the functions of the collector of this lustral gold carried with them no brand of ignominy for those who filled this unpleasant public office; for we find, in the *Inscriptions* of Gruter, No. 347, the epitaph of an agent of this sort, who is described thus: P. AELIO T. F. AVRI LVSTRALIS COACTORI.

The lustral tax brought in too much gold to the public treasury for it to be readily renounced. Thus, Alexander Severus, who had a horror of gold from so infamous a source, decided that it should be purified by using it for foundations of public utility; and so he applied it to the restoration of the Theater, the Circus, the Amphitheater, and the Stadium, to the end that these monuments, devoted to the pleasures of the people, might be supported at the expense of Prostitution. (*Lenonum vectigal*, says Suetonius, *et meretricum et exoletorum, in sacrum aerarium inferri vetuit.*) Lampridus, in recounting this respectable reform, which marked the reign of Alexander Severus, adds that this austere and virtuous prince had conceived the thought of doing away entirely with the young auxiliaries to public debauchery (*habuit in animo ut exolateos vetaret*); but the Emperor feared that this measure would convert a public opprobrium into an outburst of individual passions, "for the reason that," says the historian of the Caesars, "men desire in a more lively fashion that which is forbidden them and when it is forbidden, conduct themselves with a sort of fury." Moreover, since Alexander Severus diminished all the taxes (*vectigalia*), reducing them to the thirtieth part of what they had been under Heliogabalus, we must believe that he left at its ancient figure that on Prostitution. This tax underwent various modifications, to which it is impossible to assign an epoch. Under the Emperor Phillip, who made no attempt to hide his Christian inclinations, masculine prostitution ceased to pay a tax, being entirely abolished in principle, if not in fact, by imperial edict. (See Lampridus, Chapter 23 of the *Life of Alexander Severus.*) Later, the immodest lustral tax

was only paid every five years, like the other taxes on trades and persons. It was called then the *chrysargyrum*, a word formed from the Greek, and including the two words, *chrysos* and *argyriom*, *gold* and *silver*, no doubt with the object of expressing the fact that some redeemed their infamous industry in gold while others did so in silver, as well as the fact that the tax was not an equal one for all, although its motive was a homogeneous one, the varieties of Prostitution not regulating the differences in the legal term.

We do not possess, otherwise, precise notions as to the quotas of this lustral poll tax, which was exigible at the beginning of the fifth year of this species of contract entered into between the State and the agents, direct or indirect, of Prostitution. The payment of the tax was, in a manner, an authorization to exercise the scandalous trade for which it served as a sort of patent, if it is possible to characterize an ancient fact with these modern expressions. The lustral privilege was thus limited to five years in order that those who trafficked in Prostitution might be able always, before the expiration of the period, to declare that they had abandoned their ignoble trade with the object of returning to a respectable mode of life. The collection of the *chrysargyrum* was entrusted to certain officers of good character who were charged with seeing that the tax was properly levied and that the funds were properly returned to the public treasury. These officers bore the title of *lustrales*, as we see from an inscription in the collection of Fabricius: PRIMIGENIO LVSTRALI AVGG. N. N. ALFIA VERECVNDINA PATRI PIENTISSIMO. This inscription, which must date from the fourth century, shows us the first supervisor of the lustral tax, or rather the first *lustralis* of the Empire; but it does not name him, merely describing him, in the name of his daughter, as a very tender father, *patri peintissimo*. The name of the daughter of this collector, deserves to be remarked: Verecundina was equivalent to *modest*, and such a name may be taken as an attempt to justify the equivocal position of a girl who had been reared in the midst of the impure functions of her father's house.



We do not believe it is necessary to seek the origin of the word *lustralis*, in the five-year period during which Prostitution had nothing to pay in to the treasury; Ulpianus would employ the word *lustralis* in the sense of *quinquennial* (*lustrum*) without depriving the word of its primitive signification, which indicated a species of expiatory penalty.

Zosimus, the Greek historian, who is very prejudiced against the Christians, bitterly reproaches Constantine the Great with having inflicted a new tax on the trade of the meretrix, since the word *chrysargyrum* does not appear to have been employed until about this period; but Zosimus furnishes no proof to support the accusation which he directs against the morality of the Gospel itself, by attributing to the first Christian Emperor, the creation of a scandalous and corrupting tax. It is certain that this tax had existed from the time of Caligula, and that it had never been abolished, being merely circumscribed and regulated. Constantine had conceived the project of suppressing at once the tax and the impure tolerance which was the pretext for it; he published new edicts with reference to the *lustral collection*, which included all sorts of taxes, levied on all sorts of commerce, and he permitted the lenons and the courtezans to exist on condition that they pay into the treasury a part of their receipts. This was to wink at an abuse contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and even to that of philosophy, but it was not to create or approve that abuse, which was not reformed, in part, until the reign of Theodosius the Younger. For the rest, from the second century, philosophers had been protesting their indignation against this odious tax, which assured an impunity to debauchery and which placed the vilest acts under a governmental guaranty. Justinian, in his *Apology for the Christians*, written in the middle of the second century, energetically accuses the emperors of receiving the tribute of Prostitution. "As the Ancients," he says, "raised great herds of cows and goats, so we in the same manner today raise up children destined to infamy, and women of good will (*muliebrem patientiam*, according to the Latin translation), and this throng of women, of Cinaedi, and

of Fellatores with impure mouths (*apicorum spurco ore*) continue to pay the revenues which you are shameful enough to accept!"

It was Theodosius II who in part executed Constantine's projects and he suppressed the tax on lenons in the lustral collection; he could not have preserved this tax and thus have protected the lenocinium. In placing an end to this hideous commerce, and in proscribing it under the severest penalties, he did not pardon the carelessness of his predecessors, and he loudly reproaches the latter in the *Prolegoumena* to his novella *De Lenonibus*, promulgated in 439: "The insouciance of our forebears has let itself be circumvented," he says, "by the damnable cleverness of the lenons, who, under pretext of a certain lustral payment, had been authorized to make a commerce of corruption and debauchery (*ut, sub cujusdam lustralis prestationis obtentu corrumpendi pudorius liceret exercere commercium*).” In this same novella, the emperor demands whether the lenons are to be permitted to live in the Capital of the Eastern Empire, and whether the treasury must be enriched by the product of their infamous industry (*aut eorum turpissimo quaestu aerarium videretur augeri*). Theodosius thus cut off the lenons from the lustral collections; but he did not exempt the courtezans, who remained the tributaries of the treasury. The chrysargyrum continued to be exacted with much severity from all those concerned with the commerce under any head; the lenons and the young artisans of debauchery were no longer included in the recenscion which took place every four years, and not, as prior to the reign of Constantine, every five years. This recenscion was carried out very scrupulously in all quarters and in all houses, so that each inhabitant was forced to justify his means of existence in the eyes of the Emperor. Those who were unable to pay the tax on account of their extreme poverty did not escape ill treatment on the part of the collector. Zosimus informs us that the levy under Constantine was made with so much rigor that mothers sold their children and fathers prostituted their daughters in order to pay the chrysargyrum, the most onerous and the most unjust of all

the taxes. We thus see that the impure vectigal had not ceased to entwine itself in the mercenary populations of the cities.

Historians are not in accord among themselves as to the application of this tax; which touched not only the agents of urban Prostitution, and which had ended by becoming annual in place of quadrennial. Cedrenus, however, who in the eleventh century compiled his *Universal History* after chroniclers who are today lost, takes care to explain from his point of view the constitution of the chrysargyrum as it existed at the end of the fifth century. "Every mendicant," he says, "every prostitute (*porne*), every repudiated woman, every slave, every freed man, all paid a certain revenue to the treasury. A levy had also been made on mules, apes, mares and dogs, whether in the city or the country. Man or woman, each individual subject to the tax, paid in a piece of silver. A similar sum was demanded for each horse, each bullock and each mule, but the ass and the dog were not taxed, except at six oboles a head." Cedrenus seems to forget in this nomenclature, the merchants of all sorts (*negociatores*) who took part, more or less, in the chrysargyrum, and who are designated collectively in the decrees relative to the lustral tax. All the historians are unanimous as to the harshness of the collectors, whom they picture, moreover, as high personages, honored with the special confidence of the emperor. Cedrenus says, on this subject that one immense groan arose from the city, the suburbs and the neighboring country, at the moment that the fiscal tax was placed in the hands of an implacable army of collectors, resembling a cloud of grasshoppers. It would appear, nevertheless, that the prostitutes and their vile escorts had more to suffer than all the others subject to the tax, probably for the reason that the levy was exacted of these poor wretches with less official control, being subject only to the mercy of the officers of the treasury. Evagrius, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Book III., Chapter 39), tells us that a search was made for courtezans and debauchees in the lupanars and in the wine-shops; that ruses and violence were employed to convict them of the fact of prostitution, and that they were not given the liberty of using their

bodies until after they had been given a brevet (*charta*) which determined at once their vile trade and the amount of the lustral tax.

It was reserved for the Emperor Anastasius to accomplish a reform which the Christian Church had been demanding for centuries, and which Constantine the Great had not been able to effect, despite his good will in the matter. Such is the evidence of an anonymous writer, author of a work entitled *De Synodis*, who cites Ducange in his *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infirmae Graecitatis*. Evagrius gives us a curious account of the abolition of the chrysargyrum by Anastasius, at the beginning of the sixth century. "This execrable tax," he says, "was an outrage to God, a shame to the Gentiles themselves and an affront to the Christian Empire, since it authorized infamies in the shameful lucre of which it shared." The collectors in charge of the chrysargyrum, were, however, honorable men, who, after having been enriched at the expense of vice, filled in the State most imposing functions and did not blush at the turpitudes which their secretaries and their agents had committed in their name and under their authority. Anastasius was aware of all the horrors which were committed in the lustral collection, and he resolved at once to put an end to this scandal. Vainly did a clever man, called Thucydides, endeavor to take up the defense of the chrysargyrum and to prove that it was as just as it was necessary. Anastasius denounced him as immoral and iniquitous before the Senate and abolished the tax by law, ordering that the books of the collectors of and speculators in the tax be burned. The latter promised that they would soon obtain the reestablishment of the chrysargyrum which had obtained for them so many fine benefits, and they awaited merely a new reign in order to set up this assessment once more, with the aid of the original charters which they had preserved or which they knew where to find at need. But Anastasius, warned of their hopes and their projects, wished to deliver one last blow.

He feigned to regret the precipitancy with which he had acted, in depriving himself of so productive a source of public revenue;



he loudly accused himself of imprudence and lamented the fact that he had not listened to the counsels of Thucydides, who besought him to respect a tax which the emperors from the time of Caligula had looked upon as the wealth of the treasury. Could it be that this gold was not purified by the use which was made of it, when it was applied to the expenses of the army, or of religion? Anastasius thereby indicated his intention of reestablishing the impost. He summoned before him the collectors of the chrysargyrum and declared that he repented of having impoverished the State by suppression of the lustral tax. All present rejoiced at seeing the Emperor in such a frame of mind, and they did not conceal from him the fact that one might collect the charters and original documents by means of which the records of the treasury could be reestablished. Anastasius congratulated them on their zeal and encouraged them to spare no pains in assembling all the documents which were still in existence. The speculators in the chrysargyrum hastened to obey and went forth to seek those documents, while desolation swept the tribe of meretrices, who had just seen themselves delivered from so odious a servitude. No explanation was given of the motive which had determined the Emperor to rescind an act which was approved and applauded by all true Christians. It was known that the monks of Jerusalem had sent to Constantinople a deputation charged with soliciting, in the name of the Church, the abolition of the chrysargyrum. Now these monastic envoys had been received with much regard by the Emperor, who had also been greatly interested in the performance of a Greek tragedy in which Timothy of Gaza, not less commendable by reason of his reputation for wisdom than for his character as a poet, had characterized the abominations of this tax, worthy of Caligula, its creator. Anastasius kept up his dissimulation until the original charters had been delivered to him, through the diligence of the collectors, who had found them in the public archives, and in the collections of individuals. "Is that all?" he demanded of the first *lustralis* of the Empire. Upon receiving an affirmative response from this officer, he caused to be published to the

sound of trumpets, a proclamation to the effect that the people were invited to repair to the Circus, there to see a spectacle which had never been seen before, and which they would never see again. The people did not fail to respond to such an appeal as this. All the charters authorizing the tax having been amassed in the center of the Circus, a herald announced to those present, that the chrysargyrum had been condemned to the flames as impious and infamous. Everything, the short of it is, was burned, to the acclamations of the multitude, and the cinders from this mass of papyri fell upon the heads of the courtezans and lenons, who had not been the last to invade the seats of the circus.

It would appear, however, that the chrysargyrum was not completely annihilated in the flames, and that it was resurrected under another form, in such a manner as to furnish still, considerable sums to the public treasury. It existed under the reign of Justinian, who, however, avoided specifying it in the regulations governing the collections of taxes (*De exactoribus tributorum*, C. Just., Book X., Section 19). Justinian also does not mention it in his novella against the lenons, who had reared their heads once more and who were once more giving themselves to their horrible commerce. It might be supposed that the women alone had been included in the tax on legal Prostitution, where there figured no longer, at least ostensibly, the courtiers and passive agents of debauchery. We shall remark that Justinian is more indulgent than Theodosius toward Prostitution and toward the unhappy wretches who practiced it; he revokes the Roman laws, by virtue of which it was not permitted citizens to marry women of the theater, who had thus been branded with infamy; he himself had wedded Theodora, formerly famous among the prostitutes, daughter of a courtesan of low degree, and worthy of the lessons which she received from her mother; Justinian had covered with the imperial mantle the defilements of this mountebank, who had promenaded her beauty from city to city before mounting the throne of the empresses. But Justinian always remembers that his wife had served upon the stage the pleasures of the populace, and that she had been expelled by the magistrates, who accused

her of corrupting the youth. Theodora, it is possible, had not forgotten, herself, and it was in order to expiate the excesses of her youth that she had founded a refuge of retreat and repentance for the companions of her impurity. It is probable that this pious foundation, suggested by reminiscences of her former state, had been built with the denarii of the lustral tax. Procopius has nothing to say on this point, when he speaks of this new sort of convent in his *Treatise* on the edifices constructed in the reign of Justinian, but we have every reason for supposing that from the time of Alexander Severus, the product of the impure vectigal, had been applied to works of public utility. It was then the spirit of Christianity to employ the silver of Prostitution in combating and repairing the sad effects of Prostitution.\* But Theodora wavered in the execution of her idea, which was to produce happy results when analogous attempts were later made; we shall come upon these attempts frequently in the Middle Ages. This crowned courtesan was so imprudent as to resort to violence rather than persuasion. Five hundred public women were picked up in Constantinople, and transported to an ancient palace situated on the Asiatic banks of the Bosphorus. This palace had been magnificently arranged in order to receive the recluses; there had been assembled there everything that could be gathered together to console the inmates for the loss of their liberty and their former life. The Empress had neglected nothing in order that the penitents might be able to find there an edifying distraction; but these unfortunate beings, deprived of their lovers and their orgies, preferred a prompt death to a solitary life and one deprived of sensual joys; the majority hurled themselves into the sea the very first night; and those who remained in their gilded prison died of languor or despair. Procopius, does not inform us whether Theodora persisted in her attempt at enforced moralization, an attempt which had succeeded so badly. The poor victims whom she had shut up by force would joyously have returned to Prostitution, had they been left free to leave the trustful refuge which Theodora had given them.

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\*Cf. the Salvation Army.

## CHAPTER IX

THE legislation of the Christian emperors changed almost nothing in ancient Roman jurisprudence on the point of Prostitution; this wound, feeding on the body social, could not be cured by repressive laws and rigorous prohibitions. It was necessary, on the contrary, to leave it open and bleeding in the shadows, as an exhaust for evil passions and impure vices, since it was a necessity in the prevention of rape, adultery, and the seduction of good women (*ad vitandum*, says Lactantius, *matronarum sollicitationes, stupra et adulteria*, Book VI., Chapter 23). Such was, in all ages, the sentiment of the primitive Church; such had to be also the wise attitude adopted by the temporal powers, who almost always based their counsels upon the spiritual powers. We have explained how the councils had abstained, with much prudence, from abolishing Prostitution in fact, although they condemned it in principle; we have shown the indirect path which they had followed in arriving gradually at a reform of manners. The emperors, from Constantine on, followed no other path and continued to attack Prostitution only in its causes and its excesses. That is why, in the codes of Theodosius and of Justinian, we find no special law relating to Prostitution in general, but we do meet here and there a great number of sections which have reference to it, and which intend to regulate it by imposing upon it more or less restricted limits. There is a complete tolerance for the trade of the meretrix, properly so-called, which is looked upon as a business, and which pays tribute to the treasury. Then there is excluded from this trade, under the most severe penalties, masculine debauchery, which had always been a part of it, and finally, Prostitution is confined to its own proper boundaries, being forbidden to spread itself from then on over the vague ter-



ritory of the lenocinium. It is the latter trade which the successors of Constantine are stubborn in pursuing and combating under all its forms; it is the lenocinium which the Church denounces to the unplacable rigors of the law, as the source of Prostitution, and as the permanent fireside of a public plague.

Thus, under the influence of Christianity, the Roman law was not modified so far as the legal practice of Prostitution was concerned, and the courtesan, as a courtesan, might still invoke the protection of the magistrates. Ulpianus decides, as a pagan and not as a Christian, that a meretrix is to be protected in the matter of all the sums she has received in her character of meretrix, providing also that, if she has done a shameful thing while working at her vile trade, she had not shamefully received her salary as a meretrix. (*Illam enim turpiter facere, quod sit meretrix, non turpiter accipere, cum sit meretrix*, Digest., XII., Section 5.) This subtle commentary on the nature of the prostitute's salary proves that the meretricium was looked upon legally as a business, subject to police regulations, and possessing its own special jurisprudence, the same as any other business. In pushing still further his investigation of the text of the law, *De condictione ob turpem vel injustam causam*, the jurisconsult declares that the meretrix may not claim in a court of justice the execution of a promise which has been made to her in the role of a meretrix, for the reason that such a promise can only have a shameful motive. Finally, we arrive, in this manner, at the conclusion that the meretrix, makes use of her right as a meretrix in receiving, and that she even receives this salary honestly, even though she demands and receives it in a dishonest manner. (*Cod. Justin.*, Section *De legib. L. Non dubium*; Section *De cond. ob turpem*; Section *De donat. ante nupt.*) We shall not be surprised, therefore, at the fact that the jurisconsults, undoubtedly in accord with the Catholic doctors, had effaced in favor of the courtesans, that brand of infamy which formerly had been inflicted on all the agents of legal Prostitution, and that they had seen fit to pause at this bizzare distinction which tended to rehabilitate the woman in the meretrix. "The woman of evil life

is an indecent person, but she is not infamous, at least so long as she is not taken in a flagrant act of adultery (*Meretrix est turpis persona, non tamen est infamis, nisi in adulterio esset deprehensa. L. Si quis a parente*).”

The brand of infamy had existed for the courtezans up to the advent of the Christian emperors. Before Constantine, the ancient laws relating to this brand of infamy had been put into effect by Diocletian and Maximian, who desired to oppose a barrier to excessives in public manner. These laws forbade citizens of free condition to marry freed women whether or not they had lived in debauchery; they forbade senators and their sons to contract marriage with patrician women who had given themselves to prostitution. (Corp. Jur. Ulp., Sec. 13; Cod. Justin., Sec. 9, Book IX, Sec. 20, A. D. Leg. Jul. de adult.) Later, the brand of infamy was imposed on the daughters of lenons and of the proprietors of lupanars, in order to place an obstacle in the way of scandalous marriages which would have united senators with these women enriched by prostitution and the fruits of lenocunium (Cod. Just., Book V, Sec. 5, 1, 7). Moreover, this brand of infamy descended from fathers to their daughters, for the lenons and the masters of houses of debauchery could be punished in no other fashion on being branded by the praetor (1, 1 and 1, 4, Ut praetor, de not. infam.) The Julian law, otherwise spared them, at least so long as they were not accomplices in adultery, even without their knowing it. From the time of Constantine, they were hunted out and punished with a rigor, which only rendered them more adroit in their business, and which did not give them the desire to cease their horrible trade, more lucrative than that of their unfortunate victims.

Constantine, with one stroke, cut away half of the body of Prostitution, by causing the crime of pederasty to seek the shadows, a crime which up to then had flourished in the light of day, and which paraded everywhere its troops of cinaedi and immodest victims. From then on, that which before had been merely regarded as an intemperance of the senses became a

shameful and guilty act, detested by respectable folk and punishable by human laws. This great reform, which Alexander Severus had already attempted for the honor of morality and philosophy, was supported and sustained by Christianity, which struck with anathema those whom the praetor chastised with corporal and pecuniary penalties. Undoubtedly, prison, fines and dishonor were not an immediate and radical remedy for a spiteful vice which, for so many centuries, had corrupted all classes of society; but at least the government no longer authorized by its silence the infamous habits which are the concomitant of the most brazen depravation, and scandal no longer aided the propagation of the evil. As we have demonstrated in the preceding chapter, Constantine did not entirely suppress the lustral tax, but he purified it by forbidding that it be applied thereafter to unnatural vice and to the trade of the lenon, patent or hidden. This was not all. He increased the penalty of the Senate-Consult Claudian against ingenuae or free women who abandoned themselves to slaves or to freed men; he desired also to extinguish one of the most common forms of prostitution among the shameless patrician women, who went to choose their robust lovers among the jockeys of the circus and the gladiators of the amphitheatre, when they did not more discreetly find them in their own entourage of eunuchs or of counterfeit buffoons.

Constantine had not waited for his conversion to the Catholic faith to combat the relaxation of manners by means of laws which, although very rigorous, were barely sufficient to curb the excesses of public corruption. Among these excesses, the kidnapping of marriageable girls had become all the more violent and audacious; with the multiplication of the convents of women throughout the Empire, these asylums of Christian virginity offered a permanent prey to the cupidity of libertines. It happened also that the young and beautiful neophytes, who had made a vow of chastity and consecrated themselves to the life of a cell, frequently found, among their relatives and friends of their families, instigators and accomplices in rape, who dishonored them by forcing them to return to their worldly life.

The law *Si Quis*, published the first of April in the year 320, provided that the one who kidnapped a girl, either in spite of herself or with her own consent, should be grievously punished, and that the girl who consented should undergo the same punishment as her ravisher. (Cod. Theod., De Rapt. Virg. vel vid.) This law did not state what would be the great penalty inflicted on the ravisher, leaving in this respect wide latitude to the severity or clemency of the judge. It was the Emperor Constans who established the uncertainty of the law with respect to the penalty, and who, by a new law enacted in the month of November, 349, ordered that the guilty should be decapitated. The rest of this primitive law did not call for any explanatory corollary; all was foreseen and provided for with a terrible precision. It was provided that if some friend of the family, if the nurses of the girl, or some other person should have advised an elopement, molten lead should be poured in their mouths, in order that this part of the body which had advised so great a crime, might be closed forever. As to girls kidnapped in spite of themselves, but who had not cried out for aid, they were to be deprived of the paternal and maternal inheritance. In case a ravisher had an agreement with the parents of the kidnapped girl in order to obtain their silence and his own immunity, anyone had the right to accuse him and bring him to justice. The denouncer received the recompense, and the parents who were convicted of having endeavored to suppress the complaints or to hide the misdeed were banished to a desert island. The accomplices of the ravisher might incur the same penalty as the ravisher himself; but if they were of servile condition, they might be condemned to the flames.

We may judge that this law did not pertain to other than girls of the *ingenue* class, for the kidnapping of freed women or slaves brought with it no other penalty than those damages and interests which a master or a patron of the kidnapped girl might claim. Despite the human equality which had been formulated in the Gospel, a woman of servile birth did not possess the same rights regarding her modesty; thus, a law of Constantine exempts from the penalties of adultery those mistresses and servant maids



of the cabaret, as being unworthy of being ruled by the same laws as free citizens. Christianity did not endeavor to diminish the infamy which attached to service in the taverns, in which Prostitution played a larger roll than drunkenness.

To lend one's services to drinkers (*Si vero potantivus ministerium praebuilt*, says the law, *Quae adulterium*), was for a woman the acme of shame and synonymous with Prostitution. One commentator has demanded, on this point, whether the Latin *praebere ministerium* does not signify something other than pouring wine to drink, and whether the drunkards, who ordinarily filled their glasses themselves, did not have need in a more delicate circumstance of the good will of the wine-shop women. For example, when they snapped their fingers to demand the basin, and when they invoked Bacchus or Hercules Urinator. However this may be, every servant maid in an inn or wine shop, married or not, was in no wise obliged to observe the laws of modesty, because of the abjectness of her state (*vitae vilitas*). The law of Constantine on divorce, also touched on Prostitution, by making the lenocinium after marriage one of the causes for repudiation, and by depriving the wife who had practiced it of her dot and all her nuptial gains (Cod. Theod., Book III., Sec. 16, De repud.). But whatever may have been the efforts of Constantine looking for the establishing of a Christian police in the Empire, demoralization was general in all classes of that society where the spirit of Polytheism, that is to say, of Prostitution still lived, and Constantinople had lupanars in every street, debauched women and men in every house, while the courtesan plied her trade of an evening about the churches, as she formerly had done at Rome in the neighborhood of the theatres.

The two sons of Constantine the Great, Constantius and Constans, were less impatient than their father about putting a bridle on the abuses of Prostitution, but they succeeded no better than their father in an attempt to cure that leprosy which was a survivor of paganism. They prohibited the sale of Christian slaves for purposes of public debauchery, and, by the law of July,

343, they declared that these slaves, born of Christian parents or newly baptised, could only be purchased by ecclesiastics, or by the faithful, who must certify their religion. This law presents, however, some obscurities; for we do not know whether the first possessor of these slaves might submit them to the outrages of the lupanar, when his right of proprietorship antedated the decree of the Emperor. *Si Quis feminas, quae se dedicasse venerationi christianae legis sanctissimae dignoscuntur, ludibriis quibuddam subjicere voluerit ac lupanaribus venditas faciat vile ministerium prostituti pudoris explere, nemo alter easdem coemendi habeat facultatem . . .* It is clear that the proprietorship of the lenons and the keepers of the lupanars over slaves reputed to be Christians remained intact up to the moment when there came the question of selling them; then only the master of a slave who claimed to belong to the religion of Christ was no longer free to expose this slave for sale in the public market place, but must find as a buyer an ecclesiastic or some other Christian.

The savant, Godefroy, in his *Commentaries* on the Theodosian Code, explains thus this law, which he regards as an ingenious means of restraining the traffic in slaves and of abolishing, little by little, Prostitution; for if the obstinate pagans took a perverse joy in casting into the bad houses those poor Christian slaves whom they had purchased with this infamous purpose in view, those slaves had but to commend themselves to the charity of their brothers in Christ in order to find some good soul who would pay their ransom and who would restore to them the liberty and right of remaining pure. There came to be a pious emulation among the Christians in sacrificing their earthly goods for the redemption of slaves whom the law had vowed to Prostitution. St. Ambrose (Offic. II., 15) says that the Church had more at heart the saving of dishonored women than it did the snatching of men from death. We may understand thus why it was the Emperors Constantius and Constans desired to encourage the ransom of Christian girls who would have been condemned by their servile conditions to the detestable service of legal Prostitution.

The same Emperors did more than this; they pronounced the death penalty against any man who should commit, under any form whatever, the odious sin against nature. It was Christianity which restored to vigor the ancient *Lex Scantinia*, which had not been applied for six or seven centuries. The new law did not specify in a manner clear and concise the nature of the crime which might be committed in a number of different fashions, and it did not characterize the various degrees of the penalty which might be applied to these different cases; but it was directed with a great deal of indignation toward all acts of this sort, leaving the punishment to the discretion of the judge. "When a man," says the text of this law, "changes his role and becomes a woman, abandoning himself to other men (*cum vir nubit in femina varis paratura*), what is to be done in such a case, in which sex has lost its rights, where Venus undergoes a strange metamorphosis, and where, finally, one no longer looks for love but finds only infamy? We order that all human laws be evoked and that justice be armed with avenging glove, in order that the infamous ones who are guilty, or who have endeavored to become guilty (*qui sunt infames bel qui futuri sunt rei*) shall be given over to the most frightful punishment (*exquisitis poenis subdantur*)." Such a law as this in the Roman code was a striking disavowal of all those abject vices which pagan civilization had accepted and even encouraged, but which Christianity rejected with horror as belonging to the cult of the false god. The text of the law (Cod. Just., Book LX, Sec. 9, A. D. leg. Jul. de adult.) does not appear, otherwise, any too correct, since Alciat proposes to read *in femanin viris porrecturam* in place of *in femina viris paritura*, and since the definition of the crime stands in need of a few commentaries to fill a lacuna designedly left by the juris-consult. This definition is to be found in its entirety in the word *nubit*, which is employed in judiciary as in poetic language to express a general turpitude contrary to natural laws and to the legitimate relations between the sexes.

Theodosius the Younger, in codifying the laws of the Roman Empire, did not have the courage to complete this jurisprudence

relating to one of the most shameful facts of Prostitution; but he did declare himself the supreme defender of all the victims of all the lenocinium, which he pursued with even more vigor than his predecessors had dared to employ, for lenocinium was not an industry practiced for the benefit of the people, but, on the contrary, one incited and sustained to satisfy passions of the great and the rich. Theodosius did not always go back to the source of this industry which he condemned, and he did not dream of punishing those who had provoked it. He declared shorn of legal powers those fathers or mothers who wished to force their slaves or their daughters to prostitute themselves. The unfortunate ones who were victims of this violence or of such solicitations had but to call for the support of the bishops, the judges and the governors, whose duty it was then to put an end to this criminal oppression on the part of fathers or unworthy masters; in cases these latter persisted in their criminal designs, they were to be condemned to exile and to labor in the mines (Cod. Theod., Book XV, Sec. 8, De lenonid.). The law adds what was then the least penalty applicable to professional procurers. But a few years afterwards, the same Emperor and his colleague Valentinian struck a still more decisive blow at Prostitution by abolishing the tax on lenons. The initiative in this honorable measure was due to the administrator of the praetorium of Constantinople, the illustrious Florentius, who, seeing that the lenocinium no longer knew any bounds and was incessantly multiplying the numbers of its victims, proposed to the two Emperors the abolition of the infamous tax levied by the public treasury, devoting at the same time his private fortune to supplying the revenues which the state thus lost. The two Emperors, in accepting the generous offer of Florentius, desired to make mention of it in the novella which they decreed, in order not to fall behind the praetor in noble and pious intentions. This novella (18, De lenon.) not only abolished the tax on lenons; its object was the indirect destruction of Prostitution, by striking those, male and female, who profited by and who possessed the monopoly of it. "If hereafter," says the text of the law, "anyone, in a



spirit of audacious sacrilege, endeavors to prostitute slaves belonging to others or to himself, or free women who have rented out their bodies (*ingenua corpora qualibet taxatione conducta*), the unfortunate slave shall first be given her liberty, the ingenuae shall be freed from the impious contact, and then the author of the scandal shall be beaten with rods and chased out of that city which has been the theatre of his crime." Magistrates were ordered to look rigorously to the execution of the imperial decree, under penalty of twenty pounds in gold. But this decree, directed against the entrepreneurs and the merchants of debauchery, was not addressed to individual Prostitution, which preserved the privilege of a shameful impunity, and which only had to put in an appearance before the praetorian or the ecclesiastical police. Thus, when a woman of an evil life came to dwell in the neighborhood of respectable folk, the law authorized her expulsion, from fear that the proximity of this prostitute would corrupt the manners of those about her. (Cod. Just. L. Minae, De episc. obed). This arbitrary expulsion, without any afflictive penalties, merely proves that Prostitution was always relegated to segregated districts, in the suburbs and beyond the gates of cities. The Theodosian Code which was in force for nearly a century, does not appear to have been modified on the point of Prostitution up to the reign of Justinian, who merely confirmed the majority of the laws of his predecessors, and who completed them in the Catholic sense. Like Theodosius, he took action against the lenons, and endeavored to frighten them by an excess of rigor. He continued thus the indirect warfare which the Christian emperors had made on prostitution for more than two centuries. His first novella against the lenocinium is all the more remarkable for the fact that it presents, in the exposition of motives, a frightful picture of the secret commerce of lenons at Constantinople in the year 535, the date of the promulgation of the law (Nov. 14, Authent. col. 2, Sec. 1, De lenon). This law sums up all the imperial and Christian jurisprudence on the subject of Prostitution, up to the end of the Middle Ages. It is thus useful to know it in its entirety, and we feel that we ought to translate it in its

entirety, since it is the basis of pornographic legislation. Here it is, with a few slight elisions:

“The ancient laws have displayed a horror of the state and name of those who make a commerce of public women (*Lenonum causam et nomen*); many of these laws contain severe provisions against these persons; we ourselves have, for a long time, increased the punishment which awaited these wretches; we have, what is more, made up, by means of other laws, the omissions of our predecessors; and still more recently, when the scandalous disorders which a traffic of this sort had occasioned in our Capital were denounced to us we did not disdain to give them our attention. We have learned that certain individuals are in the habit of living illicitly, employing cruel and odious means for the purpose of enriching themselves with an abominable lucre, running about the provinces and distant countries with the object of deceiving miserable girls (*Juvenculas miserandas*) by promising them slippers and clothing,\* and having taken them with these snares (*et his venari eas*), they bring them back to this fortunate city and establish them in houses which they possess, giving them a bare existence and a few clothes and then giving them over to public debauchery, themselves taking the profits from this deplorable Prostitution; we have learned, moreover, that they force these sorry victims to subscribe to certain contracts, in accordance with which, during the time which their masters judge it proper to fix, they are bound to fill impious and criminal functions; they even demand caution on the part of their victims; and crimes of this sort have become so multiplied that they are permitted almost everywhere, in this imperial city, as well as in the country beyond the Bosphorus, and, what is still more horrible, these habitations of impurity (*tales habitationes*) have been opened near the churches and the most respectable houses. Finally, in our time, things have come to such a point of impiety and iniquity that decent folk who pity these unfortunate ones would like to rescue them from their vile trade

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\*Cf. the modern “white-slaver.”

and lead them to a state of legitimate marriage, and yet do not know how to do so. There exist also certain criminals who expose young girls to the perils of corruption before they have obtained their tenth year, and charitable persons are barely able with much gold to redeem these poor children and enable them to contract chaste unions. The corrupters employ ten thousand ruses, of which no expression can give any idea, and the evil has amounted to such a degree of abomination that the places of debauchery which once hid themselves in the most remote quarters of Constantinople are now spread throughout all the quarters and all about the city. A long time ago, some one secretly informed us of these turpitudes. Finally, the magnificent praetors charged by us to inquire into this subject, have made to us similar reports, and at once, after having heard them, we have thought it necessary to employ the aid of God to deliver our capital promptly from such a defilement.

“Consequently, we enjoin all our subjects to be as chaste as possible, for chastity, added to confidence in God, alone can elevate the human soul; but inasmuch as there are many fragile minds who permit themselves to be led into the sin of lust through artifice, through trickery or through want, we absolutely forbid any commerce in prostitution (*Nulli fiduciam esse pascere meretricem*, a passage which is very obscure), having women in one’s house giving them to public debauchery (*Publice prostituere ad luxuriam*) or buying them for any other traffic. We forbid also having them subscribe to contracts in debauchery, demanding cautions of them and doing anything else which may cause these imprudent girls, in spite of themselves, to lose their chastity. It shall no longer be permitted to deceive them by the allurements of fine clothing or rich adornments or by simple support, in order to constrain them to dishonor themselves. We shall not suffer anything of this kind in the future, and we decree by statute on this point, with all necessary provisions, that any contracts of the sort referred to shall be declared null and void. We shall not permit unworthy lenons to deprive young girls of what they have given them, but we decree otherwise that they shall be

themselves expelled from this happy city, as pestiferous citizens, as the destroyers of public chastity, as the corrupters of slaves and free women, as those who reduce them to the necessity of selling themselves, and as those who deceive and support these women for the immodesty of all. We order, therefore, that if anyone hereafter takes a girl to his house, in spite of herself under pretext of providing her with support and then appropriates the fruit of that girl's prostitution,\* he shall be seized by order of the honorable praetors of the people of this happy city and condemned to the extreme penalty. For if we have delegated to the praetors the duty of punishing assassinations and thefts of silver, how much more reason have we to charge them with the duty of pursuing the murder and the theft of chastity! If any one lodges in his house one of these lenons and suffers him to exercise there his ignoble trade, and does not drive him out as soon as he learns of it, he himself shall be condemned to a fine of one hundred pounds in gold and to have his house confiscated. In case hereafter any corrupter receiving a young girl in his house shall make with her a written bargain for the surety of which this girl shall give a guarantor (*Fideijussor*), the corrupter shall not draw any advantage from the obligation of the girl or of that of the guarantor, for the obligation of the former being null in all its parts, the guarantor shall not incur any obligation towards the lenon. The latter, moreover, shall incur as we have just said, a corporal punishment and shall be expelled from this great city.

“And now, we would have the women (and we beg them to do so) live chastely and not let themselves be drawn in spite of their own wills into a licentious manner of life nor let themselves be constrained to do evil for we hereby prohibit and punish the lenocinium, not only in this city and its environs, but also in the provinces which belong to this Republic, and above all those which God has joined to our Empire, all the more for the reason that we desire to preserve pure and immaculate the gifts that we

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\*Cf. our Mann Act.



hold. We have faith in God, Our Lord, and we believe that our zeal for chastity shall be the glory and strength of our government, and that God shall recompense us according to our work. Rejoice then, Honorable Citizens of Constantinople, in the benefits of this chaste law; later, we shall have recourse to the voice of the Church, in order that you may know our solicitude for you and our efforts to bring about the reign of chastity and piety, by the aid of which we hope to see our Republic in this state of prosperity."

This fine law, dating from the consulate of Bellisarius, Calends of December, 535, was addressed to all the magistrates of the Eastern Empire, along with the order to publish it and to bring it to the attention of all citizens by means of successive proclamations, in order that no one might be able to pretend ignorance with regard to prescriptions of the law. Nevertheless, it was still eluded, and the lenons continued to make a business of Prostitution by taking sureties for the girls who entered into contracts with them. Not only did they demand always certain substantial guaranties, but they even forced their dupes into the bonds of a terrible oath, which the latter did not dare to break, as the result of which, in order not to perjure themselves, they endured in silence the infamy of their trade. Moreover, the magistrates made no distinction in the nature and the object of the guaranties; and, in order to remain faithful to the letter of the ancient Roman law, they condemned every guarantor to keep their obligation, without disturbing themselves as to whether or not the obligation was a pure one. Justinian was forced to add a new law to the former one a few years after its promulgation. This novella (Authent. Collat. V., Sec. 6, Nov. 51), provoked by the complaints of John, Prefect of the Praetorian, twice Consul and a patrician, branded the unworthy knavery which the lenons had conceived in order to abuse their unfortunate pensionnaires, who looked upon themselves as bound by an oath, and therefore, thought that they were but acting piously in preserving that oath at the price of their chastity as though the transgression of such an oath was not more agreeable to God than its preservation.

“As a matter of fact,” says the prelude to the law, “if any one has received from another an oath, for example a murder or an adultery or any other evil action, it shall not be necessary for this oath to be kept, since it is shameful, illicit and leads to perdition. As a consequence, he who shall demand an oath of this nature shall be condemned to a fine of ten pounds in gold; and the judge who shall have authorized such an odious oath shall undergo the same penalty whatever may have been his motives and intentions. This fine shall be paid to the woman who shall have taken the oath, in order to put her in the way of leading a more respectable life (*Ad. aliquen bonad figuræ vitam*), and the unfortunate shall find herself thus cleansed of her sacrilege before God and man.”

This was not the last legislative measure taken by the Emperor Justinian in order to reform the manners of the Empire, and to cure as quickly as possible the wounds of Prostitution. He did not fail, for example, to see that the ancient legislation regarding public baths was rigorously observed and he added to it certain moral prescriptions which had for object the removal of all occasions of debauchery. Thus, although the public baths of men were separated from those of the women, he desired that the same separation should exist in the individual baths, and he expressly forbade the two sexes to bathe together, excepting in the case of a husband with his wife. But the latter could not bathe with other men, nor even with children, under pain of being repudiated and being deprived of her dowery. As to husbands who bathed with strange women, they were punished by being deprived of all the property they might expect of their legitimate wives. (Cod. Just., De repud., 1, 1, et Nov. 22, De nupt.) One might extract from the Justinian Code a number of other provisions having a bearing more or less on acts of public debauchery, referring indirectly to these circumstances reprehensible in the eyes of morality rather than those of the law. The influence of the Empress Theodora was by no means pernicious from the point of view of a police of manners; but the indulgence of the legislator toward the unfortunate victims of Prostitution

is not to be seen everywhere, since we view him seeking out and pursuing with severity the instigators to debauchery.

The successors of Justinian made but few additions to his jurisprudence; they merely increased the penalty to the lenocinium, which always hid itself behind the meretricium, and which even risked punishment in order to enrich itself; as to the meretrices they were in reality protected, although closely watched and subject to rigorous police conditions, especially at Constantinople and in the large cities. Legal prostitution was controlled in very nearly the same manner in the Christian world, which merely "changed face without changing vices," according to the expression of the learned M. Rabutaux, the first historian of Prostitution in Europe.

(END OF INTRODUCTION)

## PART III

### CHRISTIAN ERA : FRANCE

#### CHAPTER I

**I**T IS almost impossible to establish, by means of historical induction, the moral character of the Gauls and the Cimbri, who had peopled Gaul fifteen or sixteen centuries before the Christian era; we do not even know definitely the origin of those savage tribes whom the learned investigators of our history would have them to have come from the north rather than from the east. We cannot go back to their cradle in order to discover their instincts and their habits from the social point of view. We must, therefore, have recourse to hypotheses, to guesses it may be, in order to find in ages so obscure some fugitive and indecisive traces of Prostitution in the private life of the Gauls prior to the conquest of Julius Caesar. It is after having reviewed the small number of Greek and Latin authorities who have preserved a tradition of the first inhabitants of Gaul that we are enabled to determine the facts, beyond any doubt, that among them Prostitution did not exist and could not exist in the legal state; but we must be convinced in finding, in Druidic religion, an evident trace of sacred Prostitution; as to guest Prostitution, it does not appear to have been mingled with the noble and generous idea which those proud people attached to the cult of hospitality. Nevertheless, the manners of the Gauls among themselves were far from being always austere and irreproachable.

Could Prostitution properly so called have had a regular and permanent existence in a nation which had made of woman a privileged being, a sort of earthly divinity, a living bond be-



tween earth and Heaven? Under such conditions, wholly exceptional as they were, the woman did not even possess the right to give or to sell herself to every comer, except under pain of losing her divine aureole; the man who would have been the accomplice in this species of affront to feminine dignity, would have been looked upon as sacrilegious. And so Prostitution was never more than an isolated fact, very rare, and surrounded always with a mystery which the guilty parties for reasons of safety kept impenetrable. Undoubtedly there were, among the Gauls and Cimbri, certain women who were vicious through an excess of sensuality or cupidity; there were also men who were of an ardent and libertine nature, who were not satisfied with the sensual compensations which old and young did not blush to take by dishonoring each other out of respect for the feminine sex. But acts of Prostitution were only accomplished far from the camp or the city, in the depths of the forest, under cover of night. There were never prostitutes so-called, who practiced their shameful trade overtly or who confessed to the practise of it, for they would have expelled with ignominy the degraded woman who would have despoiled herself of her divine character by giving herself to public contempt. The Germans, who were but brothers of the Gauls, despite their enmities and their mutual warfares, dealt in the same fashion with women surprised in a flagrant act of prostitution or convicted of not being strangers to such an act. These women had to leave the village which they defiled with their presence and each member of the tribe would arm himself with a stone to hurl after them. Ordinarily these wretched ones were permitted to flee and dared not reappear again, being forced to bury their shame in the depth of woods; but sometimes an unhappy one, cast down by the blow of the stones as she was obeying the sentence of expulsion, would find the shower of rocks, accompanied by a hue and cry and bursts of laughter on the part of all the people. In the minds of the Germans, this punishment was suited to the misdeed; the courtesan who had lived by the gifts of all died under the stones which all hurled upon her with fury, animated as the men were by the cries

of their wives, who would not pardon in one of their number a forgetfulness of a duty which she owed her sex.

The Celts had in general a respect for their wives which excluded any idea of Prostitution. In the majority of their tribes, according to Athenaeus (1, XIII, Chap. 4), young girls freely chose their husbands. It was at a feast given to young men of marriageable age that the parents of a marriageable daughter sat her down to make her choice among these suitors, who would recount their high deeds of war or the chase, drinking cider and mead and singing old national and warlike airs. At the end of the meal, the girl would proclaim the bridegroom whom she had chosen as the handsomest or bravest, by bringing water to one of the guests to wash himself according to the expression which Chivalry had adopted respecting this ancient usage. It is probable that this manual ablution represented, in the emblematic language of the Celts, forgetfulness of the past and purity of conjugal life. The married woman exercised a sort of priesthood in the tribe, all the more for the reason that a prophetic genius was attributed to the feminine nature. The Celts being always ready to see a goddess in the most vulgar woman; she it was whose advice prevailed in all the assemblages where questions of peace or war were discussed; she it was who interposed in quarrels and combats born in the midst of orgies; she it was, finally, whom everyone listened to or consulted as an oracle. There was even a Senate of women composed of sixty members representing the sixty principal tribes of the Gauls. And this Senate, the existence of which seems to date to the twelfth century before Christ, exercised a sovereign government over the Gallic Confederacy. This superiority accorded to the feminine sex did not admit the possibility of the organized Prostitution secretly tolerated or openly avowed and recognized. Women could not be considered as instruments of pleasure nor impressed to meet the needs of the debauchee.

And yet, the husband possessed the right of life and death over his bride, as well as over his children; and we may suppose in certain delicate circumstances he made a cruel application of this

supreme right. Thus, when he had conceived doubts on the subject of paternity, he would take the newborn at the moment it saw the light and expose it naked upon a great shield of osiers, which he abandoned to the current of the neighboring river. If the current carried the shield with the child to the bank where the mother stood stretching out her arms, this latter had nothing to fear from the jealousy of her husband; for the genius of the river had thereby proclaimed the legitimacy of the child and innocence of its mother. On the contrary, when the child had been submerged beneath the water, as though the river were unwilling to bear the fruit of adultery, the mother had to die in her turn, convicted of having betrayed the conjugal faith, and the outraged husband would kill her with his own hand or push her into the stream which had devoured her child. This terrible test of suspected paternity would seem to prove, however, that the Gallic women were not free from errors of the heart or the attractions of the senses. Among all the rivers, the Rhine was the most renowned for its aversion to bastards; never did a husband dare question the decrees which this sacred river had pronounced in saving a child. The Emperor Julian reports, in one of his letters, this ancient superstition attached to the Rhine, which the Celts had made divine. "It is the Rhine," says the Epigram of the *Anthology*, "it is that river with its impetuous current which determines among the Gauls the sanctity of the conjugal couch. Barely has the newborn left the maternal breast, barely has it given its first cry when the husband takes it; he couches it upon a shield, and runs to expose it to the caprice of the waves, for he does not feel in his breast the beat of a father's heart until the river, the judge and the avenger of marriage, has pronounced the fatal decree." Adulteries must have been extremely rare among the Gauls, as well as among the Germans; *Severa illic matrimonia*, says Tacitus; and the husband had no need of demanding justice from a tribunal, for he was at once judge and executioner of his own cause.

The Gauls generally had but a single wife; however, the chiefs and the most eminent men of the tribe took a number of wives,

not out of libertinism, but as a mark of supremacy (*non libidine, sed ob nobilitatem*, says Tacitus). As a matter of fact, the climate of Gaul, covered at that time with swamps and forests, was cold and damp at all seasons, and the temperament of the people who dwelt there resembled this foggy atmosphere and never grew warm except from intemperance at table. The women, moreover, lived a retired and hidden life, far from the gaze of men except at the public ceremonies, religious or military, which caused them to leave those retreats inhabited by the mothers of families. These women, occupied with their children and their household, caught not even a glimpse of the horizon beyond and remained faithfully chained to obedience to their severe husbands. *Nec ulla cogitatio ultra*, says Tacitus, *nec longior cupiditas*. They possessed, moreover, a haughty and independent soul; they would have preferred death to shame and they would not have been able to bear even their own blushes. It is to be understood that they were good guardians, the ones of their virginity, and the others of their conjugal fidelity, recalling that principle which served as a basis of their morality: "A woman who has given herself of a man cannot pass herself into the arms of another." In accordance with this principle which regulated their conduct, they did not believe themselves authorized to contract second marriages. The law, however, did not prevent them from remarrying, notably in some tribes where custom was determined by the proverbial formula: "A woman who has slept with two men is guilty if they are both living at the same time." The virtuous Chiomara, cited by Plutarch in his *Treatise on Illustrious Women*, prefers to break the tribal law rather than to permit the author and the witness of her dishonor to continue living. Chiomara was the wife of Ortiagontes, chief of the Galatae, or the Gauls of Asia, who were defeated and subjected by the Romans in the year of Rome 565. Plutarch does not tell us whether or not Chiomara was beautiful; but he informs us that she had been violated by the Roman centurion who had made her a prisoner. She appeared to resign herself to this insult, and when the envoys of her husband brought her ransom, she told



them in the Gallic language that she also had a ransom to demand. She had the cleverness to entrap the centurion who had outraged her, and she had his head cut off by the Galatae, who led her back to Ortiagontes. The latter, to whom she offered the bloody head of the poor centurion, was indignant at a murder committed in contempt of the law. "I have perjured myself," she told him in substance, "but there must not remain living upon earth a single man who can boast of having possessed me."

If adultery was almost unknown among the Gauls, there is ground for believing that Prostitution was even rarer; for adultery outraged but a single husband, whereas Prostitution extended the outrage to all women, who felt themselves equally offended by the misconduct of a person of their sex. Now the law of the Druids gave women permission to judge their own affairs in a case of this sort. Duclos, who relates this detail in a memoir on the Druids, adds that, in a treaty concluded between the Gauls and the Carthaginians in the time of Hannibal, it was stated that if a Gaul complained of the conduct of a Carthaginian, the case was to be taken before the magistrate of Carthage; but if it was a Carthaginian who complained, the Gallic women were to be the judges. There existed thus a tribunal of women, whose duty it was to pass judgment in causes involving honor, and in damage suits. The barbaric peoples were not less susceptible than the Greeks and Romans in this regard, and of all the insults which might be addressed to a woman, that of *prostitute* was looked upon as the most grave. We shall see later how Rotharis, King of the Lombards, punished with a heavy fine this insult, which appeared to have been all the more frequent from the fact that it was not so much merited. The Gallic women were, then, naturally the judges of anything of an injurious nature pertaining to the person, and they were thus in touch with the facts of Prostitution. For example, when a Gaul, noble or plebeian, had married, without knowing it or otherwise, a woman of evil life, the women would assemble to make an inquiry regarding the unworthiness of the bride. Tacitus had remarked among the Germans this horror of prostitutes, a horror which the Gauls shared:

*Non solum senatoribus*, he says, *sed et plebeis hominibus meretrices uxores ducendi jus denegabatur; cum virgines solum duci posse*. These assemblies of women were undoubtedly called sometimes to pronounce on questions of gallantry and sentiment, an institution which was to make its reappearance in the Middle Ages with the Courts of Love.

Hospitality, as we have said above, was better established among the Gauls than among the other peoples, for they looked upon it as a crime worthy of the thunderbolt to close one's door on a stranger or to do wrong to a guest after having received him. The guest became a brother, a friend, a sacred ward; but his first duty was to respect the couch of the man who had received him with cordiality. The Gauls were less jealous of a husband's honor for the reason that they never yielded to the craven concessions of guest Prostitution. As to sacred Prostitution, it certainly had no place in the religion of the Druids, a religion wholly metaphysical, embracing the most elevated dogmas of the religions of Egypt and of India, a mysterious cult surrounded with shadows and terror, and one which did not seek to offer material seductions to its priests and worshipers. The Druids were philosophers, the majority of them proved by age, living a communal life in the heart of impenetrable solitudes; they never communicated with the profane except in a few exceptional circumstances, at the solemn fetes, which had in them nothing that was voluptuously attractive, and which often took place to the accompaniment of human sacrifices. The Druids, moreover, were not only the ministers of religion; to them alone belonged the duties of legislation, government and public education; they taught the exact and the sacred or philosophic sciences. Their life could not be as austere as their doctrine, and they took care not to destroy the veneration of which they were the object, by mingling with religious things debauchery or pleasure. They possessed, moreover, in their colleges, prophetesses and virgins who, it is possible, did not confine themselves to serving in the ceremonies of Druidism. These Druidesses, of whom we catch a sight here and there in the history of the Gauls, like somber ap-

paritions as it were, were in the habit of hiding themselves in grottoes and in the hollows of secular oaks; they fled at the approach of men and only rendered their oracles at night, to the gleam of lightning, the sound of the thunderbolt and the noise of the storm. Despite the prestige with which epic tradition has clothed the figure of the beautiful and appealing Veleda, the theory may be advanced that these *baciae* were ordinarily hideous old hags, like the sybils of Roman paganism. They seemed to have forgotten their sex, along with all sentiment of modesty, for in certain Druidic ceremonies they showed themselves entirely nude, the body rubbed with oil and tinted black, as though to imitate the color of the Ethiopian skin. (*Tota corpore oblita*, says Pliny, in Book XXII of his *Natural History*, *quibustam in sacris et nudae incedunt, Aethiopum colorem imitantes*.) When the Romans, after the revolt of the Iceni in Britain, desired to take possession of the Isle of Man, which was one of the strongholds of Druidism, the women of the island, black as furies, hurled themselves naked, torches in their hands, into the midst of the combatants. The Romans were more frightened at this apparition than they were at the cries and furious resistance of their enemies.

If Prostitution had no reason for being in the higher religion of the Druids, either among their lessons in philosophy and their metaphysical instructions or in their auguries drawn from the palpitating entrails of a man who had been flayed alive, or through the smoke which arose from a pyre of human victims, clothed in their wicker colossi, we may still suppose with a good deal of probability, that it existed, in fact or in principle, in the lower cult, that is to say, about the savage altars of certain secondary divinities, who had been created by the superstition of the people, and whom the Druids did not look upon as hostile to their transcendent religion. Among the Gauls, there were undoubtedly certain depraved minds, certain hysteric natures, certain carnal instincts, as there are among any people, although they were rarer and less brazen. Those who, by way of exception, experienced this appetite of the senses and a vague curios-

ity in debauchery, would evoke, in order to satisfy that appetite, that curiosity, the shameful pretext of Prostitution. And so, they proceeded to invent gods to whom the sacrifice of virginity was an agreeable offering. They encouraged lust by creating for it sanctuaries, and by authorizing it in the guise of a divine consecration. It is permissible to suppose that among the *vaciae*, whom popular tradition rendered celebrated under the name of *fays*, there were those who demanded, when one came to consult them in their retreats, a proof of compliance and good will, which their old age, their ugliness and their redoubtable character did not favor any too much. All the marvelous legends of the Middle Ages testified to these strange bargains which the Druidesses concluded with their audacious visitors, who felt that they could never sufficiently pay for their oracles. What was done by these old Gallic sybils, by certain *eubages*, certain *simnothees*, certain degenerate members of the Druidic colleges, was done for their own profit, and they constituted themselves, of their own right, the gods or guardians of springs, rivers, woods, mountains, and stones. They chose their residence in the place where their cult had been established, and they levied an obscene tribute on those imprudent ones, men or women, who traversed their domain, or who approached their stronghold. It was they who guided the lost traveler across the desert, on the rocky peak, in the dangerous defiles; it was they who had barks on the most somber lakes, and who guarded the bridges between precipices. Woe to the young girl whose evil fate placed her at the mercy of these ferocious eaters of young flesh! Our fairy stories are still filled with the distant and disguised echo of the unheard-of violences of these ogres, gnomes, undines and the other genii of the Celtic solitudes. But there is nothing precise or authentic in these ancient and bizarre legends of sacred Prostitution which have been preserved in the memories of the common people after so many generations. There is a vast field open to suppositions and conjectures on the subject of the fays and ogres, who were certainly, in distant epochs, the actors or intermediaries of sacred Prostitution.



We possess only uncertain notions as to the Gallic theogony, and it would accordingly be impossible to describe the erotic attributes of those divinities which are known to us only by name. We may presume, however, from the discovery of certain monuments, that these divinities were not often any more decent in their images and in their privileges than were those of Italy and Greece. Thus, the goddess Onouava, whom archaeologists of the seventeenth century had confounded with the Mithra of the Persians, was represented by the head of a woman, accompanied by two great spreading wings, two large shells in the form of ears and two serpents which ran about her body with their tails interlaced. This image was an allegorical representation of pleasure, which flies here and there, which always has its eyes open and its ears closed, and which glides everywhere in order to entwine and devour its prey. Sometimes, she was represented by the head of a woman emerging from a rough stone on which had been engraved a rearing adder. The emblematic serpent, played, moreover, an important role in the religion of the Druids, and an idea of happiness was attached to the discovery and possession of a stone fossil, oval in shape and of a white or brown color, which was called the *serpent's egg*. This stone was looked upon as communicating to the person who bore it a singularly prolific power. The god Gourm was represented with the features of a naked hermaphrodite with the head of a dog. The goddess of physical love, the Gallic name of which was changed by the Romans to Mercia, when they joined her cult to that of Venus, had no other emblem than black stones or granite rocks, carved in the form of a cone and standing upright by the side of the road. The god Maroun (*Marunus*), whom the Romans had travestied into Mercury, presided over journeys into the mountains, especially the Alps; he had the face of a Gallic peasant covered with the *bardocuculle*, a great cape without sleeves, in the form of a monk's cloak or cowl; when this *bardocuculle* was raised, it displayed a phallus mounted on two slippered legs and bound with thongs. It was an idol of the domestic race, like the *Mairs* or the *Norns*, whose

mission it was to watch over the birth of children and to dower them in their cradles.

As to the manners of the Gallic gods, we do not know enough about them to be able to say whether or not they were more or less stained with Prostitution. We merely know that the *gaurics*, monstrous giants who were to be met at night in the dolmens and the *pulvans*, especially in Brittany, were in the habit of practicing among themselves execrable depravations. We know that the *suleves* (*sulvi* or *sulfi*) were beardless genii with soft and persuasive voices who lay in wait by night for travelers in order to obtain from the latter shameful caresses, half by force and half from fear. We know, finally, that the *thusses* and the *dusiens* (*dusii*) came to visit the virgin in her sleep and to take away her virginity, or it may be, to offer to the ardent young man the dream of a night of love, or even to essay their corrupting power on vile animals. "It is an opinion everywhere prevalent," says St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, "that certain demons whom the Gauls called *dusii* are in the habit of making impure attacks on sleeping persons. (*Hanc assidue immunditiam et tentare et efficere*).” St. Augustine adds that so many folk bear witness to the existence of these debauched demons that one has no right to doubt. The Church, the truth is, admits among the works of the Devil the nocturnal surprises of incubi and succubi, which are wholly of Gallic origin. It is probable that, despite the rigid virtue of the women of Gaul, the demons of desire laid snares sometimes from which these virtuous matrons did not always escape. Thus, Strabo (Book IV) tells us of their passion for jewelry, a passion which was shared equally by the men, for both sexes adorned themselves with chains, necklaces, bracelets, rings and golden girdles. The most elevated in dignity and the most illustrious by birth, even wore diadems, crowns and golden mitres, enriched with precious stones. It may be remarked that, in all ages and in all lands, the art of the goldsmith has been one of the most puissant arms of Prostitution.

We have seen, from the example of Chiomara, that conjugal fidelity was one of the customary virtues among Gallic women.

Plutarch recounts the history of another Galatian woman, named Canna, one of the most beautiful of her nation. The Gaul Sinorix becoming amorous of her and being unable to make her yield either by persuasion or by force so long as her husband lived, proceeded to kill this husband, who was a Roman named Sinatus. Canna took refuge in the temple of Diana. It was there that Sinorix came to pursue her with a love which she repelled with horror. She, however, forced herself to feign to consent to a marriage with the murderer of Sinatus, but on the wedding day, she presented him with a nuptial chalice which she had poisoned; after drinking half of its contents she handed it to Sinorix. "Great goddess," she cried, turning toward the altar of Diana, "you know how grievous the death of Sinatus has been to me; you are my witness that the desire of avenging myself alone has led me to survive him; I now die content. And as for you, coward," she said to Sinorix, "you who have desired to triumph in the death of my fidelity, no longer seek a couch, but a tomb!" The devotion of Eponine to her husband Sabinus was even more sublime than that of Canna, since it was prolonged for ten years. And yet, these Gauls, who inspired in their wives a tenderness so devoted and so incorruptible, were not always equally reserved on their own account, and frequently did not observe fidelity in its most scrupulous acceptation. The great historian Michelet paints them for us in his *History of France*: "Dissolute and light, wallowing blindly and by chance in infamous pleasures." In short, if the Gauls respected their wives, they did not respect themselves and in the manner of the peoples of Italy, they abandoned themselves to the most horrible and unnatural disorders, chiefly at the end of the feasts, in which they had made an immoderate use of fermented beverages. These disorders were not, as among the Greeks and Romans, the fruit of an excessive civilization and a vice of the imagination rather than of the senses; they corresponded to a gross need of incontinence, which awoke under the influence of drunkenness, and which was like an excessive and furious dementia. The feasts, prolonged till late in the night, with Bacchic challenges and bursts of obscene laugh-

ter, would terminate in a confused orgy, where, in the darkness, Prostitution would reign. Diodorus of Sicily even supposes that the Gauls associated their concubines in these nights of blind debauchery; following is the Latin translation of the Greek text, which indicates a strange aberration of the moral sense in these Barbarians: *Feminae licet elegantes habebant, nimium tamen illorum consuetudine afficiuntur, quin pitius nefariis masculorum stupris, et humi ferarum pellibus incubantes, ab utroque latere cum concubinis volutantur. Et quod omnium indignissimum est, proprii decoris ratione posthabitâ, corporis venustatem aliis legissimè prostituunt, nec in vitio illud ponunt, sed potius cum quis oblatam ab ipsis gratiam non acceperit, inhonestum sibi id esse dicunt.* The following day, with the return of dawn, each would forget what had passed in order not to have to blush for himself. The filthiest bestiality did not even take the pains, in the end, to conceal itself; and Celts of good race (*ingenui*) came to love their mares and their dogs, the companions of their adventurous warlike life.

Such was the moral situation in Gaul when Julius Caesar established there the Roman domination. The Gauls, of a light and impressionable disposition, so modeled themselves after their vanquishers that they soon became Romans, while preserving their own defects and qualities under this brilliant servitude. Already they were somewhat Hellenized in the neighborhood of Marseilles (Marsalia) and the Phocian cities; but the influence of Rome was more profoundly felt in Belgic Gaul and all the principal cities, Lyons (Lugdunum), Autun (Augustodunum), Bordeaux (Burdigala), Vienne (Vienna), Paris (Lutetia), soon had no other inhabitants, especially after the destruction of Druidism and the Druids. There remained, for more than two centuries, some scattered traces of the Druidic institution; prophetesses were still to be found in the woods; the Norns danced always in the light of the moon and in lightning; but the religion of the Greeks and the Romans was practised by the Gauls with more fervor than in the rest of the Empire; legislation had survived religion, and everything, in the Gallic regions was fashioned after



the Greek and the Roman. We have no special information as to the state of Prostitution among the Romanian Gauls but we may with certitude presume that this state was in no wise different from what it was at Rome and in the Asiatic provinces. The Gallic women merely took care to preserve their self-respect, that proud haughtiness which is their historic characteristic, and they did not provide many elements for public debauchery. But foreign women were no more lacking beyond the Alps than they were on the other side, and the governors, magistrates, and military chiefs, which Rome brought into Gaul, brought with them all those refinements of luxury to which they were accustomed. They would not willingly have deprived themselves of their cinaedi, of their eunuchs, of their female dancers, of their citharoedes and all their personnel of libertinism. Soon, with the aid of the Gallic humor, there was a recrudescence of convivial lust in togaed Gaul (*Togata*), as there had been in long-haired Gaul (*Comata*), and the feasts of Julius Sabinus at Langres (Andomatunum) found nothing to envy in those of Lucullus at Rome.

Undoubtedly, the metamorphosis which the Roman occupation had brought to Gaul was less perceptible in the country than in the city, but the gods and goddesses of Rome were everywhere received with the same transport. A few of these gods and goddesses shared the preference, as being the most in sympathy with the character of the inhabitants and with the manners of the country. Hercules, Bacchus, Venus, Isis, and Priapus had temples and statues which called forth a multitude of offerings. The Gaul had chosen out of a similarity in taste, those divinities which were less severe, and those which spoke most clearly to his senses; he had grown tired of the terrible mysteries of Tutaches, and he asked only to be able to divert himself in honor of the new gods whom Rome had brought him. This was a brilliant epoch for legal Prostitution, and, like all peoples suddenly initiated into the delights of civilization, the Celtic races arrived promptly at the last degree of social corruption. We must read the poems of Ausonius, the venerable professor of Bordeaux (*Burdigala*), who was the master of the Emperor Gratian, in order to form an idea

of the profound demoralization which had taken possession of Gallic society; Ausonius, it is to be understood, does not approve the horrors of debauchery which he lays before the eyes of his reader, but he describes them as a man who understands them for the reason that he has experienced them. The very manner in which he brands them is even more obscene than the most energetic passages of Juvenal and Horace. There are here but foetid and monstrous pleasures which are an outrage to nature; everything which could be invented by the perversity of the senses, everything except bestiality, is enumerated and traced in certain epigrams of the Gallo-Romanian poet, who addressed prayers in verse to Christ, the truth of the truth, the light of the light (*ex vero verus, de lumine lumen*)! We are astonished, after having perused these pious Christian prayers, that Ausonius should have defiled his mind by painting the lubricious contortions of the famous courtesan Crispa.

When the Sicambrians hurled themselves from Germany into Roman Gaul, when the Barbarians of the North descended into the most flourishing provinces of the Empire, with their chariots carrying their gods, their wives and their children, they did not mingle with this civilization, which was terrified at their passage, and which seemed to wither at their approach, like a river whose source has dried up. These innumerable hordes were incessantly renewed, as they spread over all Gaul, threatening to engulf the Gallo-Romanian population. The Salian tribe was the last to come, but it sought to settle on the soil already ravaged by so many successive invasions. The Salisks or Salians, that redoubtable family of Franks, which had passed near the mouth of the Yssel, began its settlement in Belgic Gaul in the middle of the fifth century, and they advanced from city to city towards Lutetia (Paris). These Salians were handsome and noble, tall in figure, with blue eyes and blonde hair; they had a gentle and intelligent air; although they devastated, pillaged and slew, they did not commit rape. This was on their part a matter of disdain rather than a pity for the vanquished populations. The manners of the

Franks remained sometimes intact under the safeguard of their religion and their laws. They would have disdained to become Romans or Gauls, and so they preserved themselves from the defilements of Prostitution which had never penetrated either the temples of Irmensul, their hospitable tents, or their fortified villages. The Salic law did not recognize the courtesan as a member of the Frankish nation.

## CHAPTER II.

THE Franks, whose name does not signify *free* in the Teutonic language, but *proud* and *unconquerable*, just as the Latin word *ferox* corresponds to *frek* or *frenck*, had not accepted, like the Germans and the Gauls, their ancestors, the domination of the women and did not accord any supremacy to this sex, which they judged inferior to their own. This was one of the distinctive characteristics of the Frankish tribe, which made nobility consist in strength of body and in energy of soul. Woman, among these barbarians who were impatient in war and careless of death, did not find herself surrounded with the prestige and religious respect which had been hers with the Gauls and the Germans from the most remote times; she possessed a consciousness of her own weakness, and so she had nothing to do with the government or public affairs but remained under paternal and conjugal subjection. Prostitution, of whatever nature, had therefore no reason for being in a society that was ruled by cruel and brutal laws, characterized by warlike habits and ignorant of the corrupting arts of civilization, indifferent to the pleasures of luxury and disdainful of all carnal misalliances. We shall soon see that if Prostitution sometimes existed, it was always hidden and never avowed.

The Frankish race was divided into two classes of individuals: persons of free condition, the *ingenuae* of the Latins, and the slaves or serfs, *servi*. These latter were probably the descendants of the Saxon or Teutonic population, which the Sicambrians or Salians had reduced to servitude, and which had been mingled with their conquerors after a number of generations. However this may be, the separation was profoundly marked between free women and serfs. These latter belonged to a master, while the former belonged only to their parents or their husbands. A woman or girl, married or widowed, never possessed the liberty



to dispose of herself; she was, so to speak, under guardianship or in slavery. The whole tribe might demand of her an account of her conduct, when she no longer was responsible to a husband or a father. In this state of permanent submission, the Frankish *ingenuae* had not dared to give themselves to acts of Prostitution, which would have put them in the class with slaves, and the latter, having each his own master and lord, might not prostitute themselves to all comers without exposing themselves to corporal penalties, and without placing a heavy responsibility on their accomplices. Moreover, in all times, as in all countries, women are but what men make them, and the Franks, despite their ferocious courage, their bellicose ardor and their petulant vivacity, were not greatly inclined by temperament to the satisfaction of the senses. And so, they formed indissoluble unions, the unique object of which was the production of male children; it is easy to understand how, with this object in view, they might readily have employed concubines in place of their wives; these concubines, as the learned Bouquet expressly says (*History of the Gauls*, Volume II, Page 422), were ordinarily but serfs, who had come by degrees to be honored by the title of wife by assuming the noble functions of the mother of a family. The Frankish women lived then a very retired life in the interior of their houses, nourishing and rearing their children, spinning flax and wool, manufacturing fabrics and sewing garments, preparing the couch and the table of their husbands, whom they followed neither to war nor to the chase nor into the juridical assemblages nor to the equestrian games. They barely dared glance out of their tents, between the surrounding palisades, to learn the issue of the combat, the joust or the chase. They lived among themselves, observing and protecting each other mutually, in such a manner that the very thought of incontinence did not enter their minds.

Nor was there anything in the religion of the Franks to favor sacred Prostitution. This religion was but a grosser paganism, which had borrowed horrible and monstrous forms from the natural elements, water, fire, earth, the tempest, the moon and the sun. They adored no other gods, and they paid these gods an

extravagant homage, accompanied by chants, dances, grimaces, contortions and masquerades. We do not know, otherwise, what was the nature of this cult, which Gregory of Tours describes as senseless (*fanaticis cultibus*), and which has left behind it a number of superstitions in Christianity. For example, in an inventory of pagan practices, drawn up following the synod of Lepines in Hainault in the year 743, notice was taken of the debauches of the month of February (*De spurcalibus in februario*), in which we may find the origin of the modern carnival; we read also in the same inventory: *De pagano cursu quem yrias nominant*. "At the Calends of January," says the Abbé Besroches, in the *Memoires de l'Academie de Druxelles*, "the women disguise themselves as men and the men as women; others, putting on skins and horns, transform themselves into beasts; all run through the streets, howling, leaping and committing a thousand extravagances." Such was the point of departure for the famous Fete of Fools, which existed in the Christian Church up to the eighteenth century. Finally, the *indculus* of superstitions which appear to us Frankish rather than Gallic speaks of women who commanded the moon and who devoured the hearts of men. It was the *striae* or sorceresses, whom the Franks looked upon as so redoubtable, and whom they accuse of being in communication with the powers of evil. We shall soon prove that these *striae*, who dwelt in the most impenetrable lairs of the forest, there practiced, under benefit of the terror which they inspired, a species of Prostitution, which they also boasted of practicing with their evil genii.

The Franks had no respect for sworn faith (*familiare est riddendo fidem frangere*, says Flavius Vopiscus), and yet, they were the faithful guardians of hospitality, according to Sylvianus. This hospitality implied no commerce of the guest with the wife, or the concubine or the servant of the house; these latter even avoided showing themselves while the host and his guests were drinking out of the same cup, exchanging daggers or bracelets, playing at games of chance, and ending by sleeping in the same bed. The traveler who stopped in a Salian camp or village

had no other excuse except repose and the appeasing of his hunger and his thirst in order to be in a state to resume his travel the following day. The traveler, therefore, had no need of finding on his route any sensual recreation, which would have been for him but a new fatigue, and which, moreover, did not figure in the program of Frankish hospitality. He demanded nothing more than an escape from the heavy lance and broadsword with which he was only too familiar on the field of battle, and which he was glad to avoid in the generosity of the fireside. Not only did the Frank not demand Prostitution of his wife, his daughter or his slave to the profit of the guest whom he received as a brother and a friend, but he even kept them at a distance, and he did not permit the latter to see a stranger in fear of disturbing their modesty. The laws of the Barbarians prove to us that they were very jealous of the virtue of their wives and that they did not suffer the least infraction of this virtue. The husband, father and master possessed the right of life or death over the slave, the daughter and the wife; an excessive use of such authority was scarcely punishable; for example, a husband who slew his wife in order to wed another did not incur any penalty, according to the ancient capitularies, other than being deprived of bearing arms (*armis depositis*). A woman slain for the crime of adultery was merely a matter of general law, and this law knew neither relaxation nor hesitation; sometimes the husband did not wait until the crime had been committed, and he would give satisfaction to his jealousy before knowing whether it was well founded or not. The capitulary contents itself with disarming a Frank who has slain his wife without good reason (*sine causa*).

We shall not insist too much upon one obstacle which was opposed to the exercise of Prostitution. A woman never belonged to herself, even in becoming a widow. If she was no longer responsible to her parents, her husband or her children, she remained in a manner subject to a communal servitude, attached to the common soil, and everyone had, so to speak, the right of surveillance over her manners. If this widow desired to remarry, she had to pay a sort of tax or ransom to the nearest relative of

her former husband or to the treasury of the prince or king whom she recognized as lord. This revenue was but three sous in gold and one dinarius (*Lex sal.*, Section 46, *Reipus*). The law of the Burgundians states that a widow who shall have voluntarily entered into a criminal liaison with a man (*quod si mulier vidua cuicumque se non invita sed libidine victa sponte miscuerit*), shall not be able to claim any damages nor to constrain her accomplice to marry her, for the reason that Prostitution has rendered her unworthy of having either a husband or pecuniary damages. The same law accords to the daughter of a free Burgundian, who shall have been seduced by a Barbarian or by a Roman, the right of claiming fifteen sols in gold from her seducer as payment for her deflowered virginity; but in the end, this girl remained branded with infamy as a result of the loss of her honor (*illa vero facinoris sui deshonestata flagitio, amissi pudoris sustinebit infamiam*). These fifteen sols in gold which the seducer was required to deliver to his victim or his accomplice represented the price of the meretricium and the girl who dared to claim it put herself in the same class with the courtezans. It appeared, nevertheless, that the legislation of the Barbarians, while imposing slavery on the feminine sex, still recognized the fact that a girl who had not yet known a man, had some little interest of her own in the body which she abandoned to her husband. For the latter, according to the old customs of the Salic law, did not contract marriage with her until after he had presented a sol and a denarius, by way of paying her for her virginity in accordance with a general tariff. This nuptial practice is preserved to our day, although given a Christian interpretation, in the *piece de mariage* which the bridal couple have blessed by the priest with the ring. This sol and this denarius which the woman received when she was married constituted the price (*praemium*) which she might demand on her own account, the payment of which, although frequently constrained, indicated her good will; she did not possess, otherwise, either land or income or the right of succession. The dot which the husband owed to the wife whom he married, was but the promise to keep her, and this dot re-



verted to the family of the wife in case of her death. Ordinarily, the presents which this family received from the future husband represented a sort of bargain in which the wife was but a piece of passive merchandise. Marriage, thus contracted by parents or by avaricious masters, was a sort of savage lenocinium, in which the woman's wage (a sol and a denarius) was guaranteed by law.

The code of the Barbarians protected women in all cases in which their modesty might receive an affront; but the woman in order to receive this protection, had to merit it by their decent and honorable conduct. We have every ground for supposing that the sorcerers and debauchees did not enjoy the benefits of this protective law and had no title to the respect of anyone. One article of the Salic law provided that it was admissible to prove the unworthiness of any woman who asserted she had been offended and who invoked the aid of a judge. This inquiry into the morality of the parties certainly involved jurisprudence in the matter of injuries, and the complaint was sometimes stopped from fear of information and testimony which would come out. Following is the text of the Salic law, from which we believe may be seen that a damage suit brought by a woman was dependent on the condition and the manners of that woman, so that the latter had to be always ready to justify her way of life: "If anyone has treated as a *stria* or a *meretrix* a woman of noble blood, and whom he has not been able to convict of the fact (*si quis mulierem ingenuam striam clamaverit aut meretricem et convincere non poterit*), he shall be condemned to pay 7,500 denarii or 187 sous in gold." It is clear from this article that whoever had been accused of having injured and outraged a woman in any manner, might defend himself by asserting that this woman, being a sorceress or a meretrix, was unworthy of profiting by the advantages of the law, since it was provided that a woman practicing a dishonorable and criminal trade could not be outraged in any case. It is to be noted that the gravest insults which might be addressed to a free woman were those of *sorceress* and *courtezan*. The enormity of the fine which the author of the outrage must pay,

undoubtedly to the woman who had been outraged, proves that the Franks despised nothing so much as sorceresses and debauched women. As to the manner in which proof was made, we can but base our hypotheses upon the judiciary habits of the Frankish race, which admitted of an oath, single combat and witnesses in order to establish a fact in the presence of a magistrate.

There are a number of versions of the Salic law, edited at different epochs and among different tribes; in all these editions, the section *De heburgio* (XXXIII), which contains such severe provisions on the subject of the cruelest insult which a woman had to fear, presents certain variations in the amount of the fine, which would appear to diminish as less horror came to be attached to the epithet of *sorceress* and *courtezan*. Thus, in the Salic law, modified by Charlemagne, the fine of 7,500 denarii is reduced to 800, and even to 600 in another code of the same law. This was but 45 sous in gold, according to an ancient manuscript, and even only 15 sous in gold according to another; such was the price of the epithet of *courtezan*, addressed to an ingenua by either a woman or a man. But we shall renounce any attempt to give an exact idea of the amount of this fine, on account of the continual fluctuations in monetary values. All that it is possible to do is to determine, by a comparison, that a fine of 7,500 denarii, making 187 sous in gold, was considerable; since a sorceress or stria, convicted of having eaten human flesh (*si stria hominem comederit*) had to pay a fine of but 800 denarii or 20 sous in gold. The Salic law recognized in the case of men but two injuries equivalent to stria and meretrix for the women; but the penalties were not so heavy, undoubtedly for the reason that they were less frequent: The one, *chervioburgus* or *strioportius*, signified *valet of a sorceress* and carried with it a fine of 2,500 denarii or 62 l-2 sous; the second, which we only meet with in the Salic law as corrected by Charlemagne, appears to have been analogous to our word *forger*, for *forger* implied especially a perjurer who gave a false oath. An article of the Salic law among the Carlovingians puts practically the same price on

forger and meretrix, by taxing the former 600 denarii or 15 sous in gold: *Si quis alterum falsatorem et mulier alteram meretricem clamaverit*. As to the strioportius, who played a horrible role in the mysteries of magical Prostitution, he was accused not merely of carrying the cauldron at the witches' sabbath and in their infernal kitchen (*illum qui inium dicitur portasseubit strias cocinant*, according to a text of the Salic law); he also served as a mount to these infamous creatures and transported them through space to their nocturnal assemblages. The sorceress was not always seated upon the shoulders of her complacent valet; she sometimes embraced him and sometimes also she would hang from the tail of his person which had been changed into that of a dog or a pig. A *chervioburgus* also had been seen flying like an arrow through the air, bearing two or three striae, who rode him in the form of a broomstick. These various sorts of insults were of so atrocious a nature that they had not been included in the catalog of ordinary crimes (*condicia*), being included under the term of *heburgium*, which implied a true poisoning and which is not sufficiently rendered by the word *calumny*. All the Barbarian legislators were, moreover, absolutely in accord as to the character of the injury which was done to a free woman by treating her as a courtesan, but all equally recognized the right of the insulter to prove the truth of his allegation. The text of the Salic law is very brief and very obscure on this point; and in order to interpret it by giving it a few necessary expansions, we must seek in the Lombardian laws of Rotharis a chapter which assuredly contains all the legislation of the Franks with regard to the *heburgium*. Rotharis, who published his code in the year 643, had based it upon the barbaric law, notably the Salic law, which he frequently did no more than clarify and commentate. According to the code of Rotharis, if anyone in a loud voice had called a girl or a woman a stria or a prostitute (*fornicariam aut strigam*), he must make honorable amends or prove the truth of what he had said. In the former case, assisted by a dozen witnesses, who brought guaranties of their oaths, he would swear not to have offered this horrible insult (*nefandum crimen*) except in an access

of rage and without legal justification; as a consequence, to punish himself for his incontinence of language, he paid a fine of 20 sous in gold and promised not to utter a similar calumny. But, on the contrary, if the author of the outrage persisted in his accusation and insisted that he could prove it, then he was committed to the justice of God, and was forced to combat the champion whom the injured woman opposed to him. If the combat by its outcome proved that the unfortunate one had deserved the name of stria or prostitute, it was she who paid the fine of 20 sous in gold. Otherwise, if the champion of this woman won the victory, the vanquished, in order to save his life was compelled to furnish a pecuniary composition which varied according to the birth and condition of the woman who had been wrongly insulted (see the *Recueil des Loas des Barbares*, published by Paul Canciani, Volume I, Page 79) in the Salic law; this insult (*meretrix*), directed against a free woman, was called in the rustic language, *extrabo*, which scholiasts have endeavored to translate into Saxon by *entropa*, which has no sense.

The other insults which might be offered a good woman and which stood in no need of proof, are not specified in the Salic law. The epithet of *screech owl* or *crow*, which alone is specified, corresponds to stria, for the reason that the sorceresses only performed their evil works at night. As to the expression, stria, as having a relation with that of prostitute, it was applied especially to old women who were suspected of going to the witches' sabbath, where they practiced, it was believed, under the auspices of the powers of evil, a thousand unclean debaucheries which we shall see perpetuated in those of magic. But it was not so much verbal as material injuries against which the Salic law was interested in protecting the feminine sex. These injuries fell into three principal classes, which might be designated thus: capillary attack, improper liberties, and immodest violences. It is known that the hair, with a woman as with a man of the Frankish race, possessed a sacred and inviolable character. It cost less dearly to kill a pregnant woman with a kick of the foot or a blow of the fist than it did to cut off her hair. In short, if the pregnant



woman died as the result of a blow in the belly, the murderer was only fined 22 sous in gold, whereas he had 30 sous to pay for having disarranged the coiffure of a woman and having caused her hair to fall over her shoulders (*si vitta sua solverit aut capilli ad scapula sua tangant*); but one was let off with 15 sous when one had decoiffed the woman merely in a manner to cause her hair to fall to the ground. Liberties of touch were subject to very discouraging fines. A free man who pressed (*instrinxerit*) the hand or the finger of a free woman was fined 600 denarii or 15 sous in gold; if he took her by the arms (*destrinxerit*), 1200 denarii or 30 sous; if he took her by the arms above the elbow (*strinxerit*), 1400 denarii or 35 sous; if, finally, he touched her breast (*mamillas capulaverit*), 1800 denarii or 45 sous in gold. This last was a fancy which cost twice as dearly as the death of a pregnant woman, and he who did not happen to possess the sum demanded by the law, lost his nose, his ears, or even worse. And yet, there are so many differences in the amount of the fines indicated by the text of the Salic law that it is impossible to reconcile them or to explain them in a satisfactory manner. Thus, in one edition which might well be the most ancient, the murder of a pregnant woman as the result of a beating (*trabettit*) carried with it a fine of 28,000 denarii, estimated at 700 sous in gold. If the infant alone died in the belly of its mother, the fine was 8,000 denarii or 200 sous.

Rape must have been very rare among the Teutonic peoples, who were not any too subject to transports of the senses. It merely found a place in the barbaric laws as a menacing penalty for libertines who otherwise would have felt no respect for the person of woman. If a fiancée (*druthe* in Saxon) in going to meet her betrothed, met on the road a man who had carnal knowledge of her through violence, the author of this outrage could not compound it at less than 8,000 denarii or 200 sous. (*Si quis puellam sponasatem vucentem ad maritum et eam in viâ aliquis adsalierit et cum ipsâ violenter moechatus fuerit.*) This composition was called, in the rustic language, *changichaldo*, meaning *market of Prostitution*. If it was established that this

fiancee had yielded of her own good will, she lost her quality of ingenua, when she happened to be of free condition. The fine was no more when a man, traveling in the company of a free woman, had attempted violence upon her (*adsalierit et vim ille inferre praesumpserit*). Woe to the guilty one if he himself was not free, and if the title of ingenuus did not speak in his favor; slave or freed man, he was castrated or put to death. The law of the Ripuarians was still more rigorous than the Salic law against the authors of deeds of violence to women. The kidnaping of a freed woman by a slave could not be pecuniarily compounded. The noble ravisher paid 200 sous. A slave who had seduced the servant maid of another and caused her death (the law does not say how), suffered castration or redeemed his person with 6 sous in gold; if the servant maid did not die as a result of the seduction, the slave received 120 blows of the whip or paid 120 denarii to the master of this servant whom he had appropriated. The punishment of castration, which reappears so often in the codes of the Barbarians, was practiced in two degrees, constituting two sorts of penalties; first, the ablation of the testicles; second, the complete removal of the virile member. It is not to be believed that the patient in either case succumbed frequently to this frightful mutilation, which today would almost always be followed by death. The operators were so clever and the victims so robust that castration entailed no accident, and a cure was not long in being accomplished.

As to adultery, it was punished among the Barbarians with an impitiable severity; but we are not to deduce from this severity that the peoples who made use of it had a just idea of the crime from a moral or social point of view. The Barbarian, Visigoth, Burgundian, Ripuarian or Frank, saw in adultery only a carnal theft and an attack on the possession of the object legitimately acquired. The theft of 40 denarii, according to the Salic law, inflicted on a free man either castration or a fine of 6 sous in gold; the theft of a woman from her husband, according to the law of the Ripuarians, demanded a composition of 320 sous in gold. If a woman during the absence of her husband, whom she

had supposed to be dead, formed a concubine liaison with another man and if the first husband suddenly came back, the latter had the right, according to the code of the Visigoths, to dispose as he pleased of his wife and of the successor whom she had given him: he was master of the situation and might either sell them, slay them or give them grace. The law of the Ripuarians, in the section *De forbattudo*, gives us a frightful picture of a vengeance which a husband might exercise against his fortunate rival under pretext of a legitimate defense. If he had surprised his wife in a flagrant act of adultery and if the author of the crime made a show of resistance, the insulted husband had the right to slay this man who had stolen his honor; after which, summoning witnesses, he put the corpse on a wattle and dragged it to a square of the city where to took up his place for forty days by the side of his victim. He would tell to all who asked him under what circumstances he had committed this murder and proclaim the justice of it. At the end of forty days, he would give up the corpse to the family of the dead man and go to swear before the judge that he had killed a man who would have killed him, and who had struck him in place of falling at his feet and demanding grace. The father equally possessed the right to deprive of life the man whom he had surprised in the act of dishonoring his daughter. If he did not slay him on the spot, the Salic law called *theoctidia* the act of taking possession of a girl who was an ingenua, without the consent of her father and mother; the man who had obtained the agreement of this girl paid to her parents a fine of 1800 denarii or 45 sous in gold. But the law does not say whether, when the fine had been paid, he thereby had purchased the authority to continue his illegitimate relations with the girl, or whether he was forced to marry the latter and to take her with him. The law of the Burgundians appears to make for the silence of the Salic law on this point, by saying that a woman who shall have freely and of her volition entered a dwelling of a man (*ad viri corten*), and who shall have cohabited of her own free will with that man shall not hold the latter for an adultery (*is qui adulterii dicitui societate permixto*); he shall merely have to pay

the parents of the woman the nuptial price (*nuptiale petium*), and he shall be free to espouse whomsoever shall seem good to him without having anything to fear.

We do not find in the Salic law any special rule concerning Prostitution properly so-called; but according to the legislation of the Barbarians, it may be affirmed that it was in no wise tolerated in the most remote epochs of our history, and that it had to hide itself or to flee as soon as it had been discovered in a camp or in a village of these austere and savage people. The ancient law of Schleswig, in which that of the Sicambrian and Salian Franks appears to have been preserved, shows us that incest was not touched by the law, when it had been committed with a debauched woman. Only she who was not infamous and who had not sold her body (*quae prius scortum non fecerit, nec infamis fuerit*) was looked upon as belonging to the family and so might preserve intact the bonds of consanguinity; she, on the contrary, who had given herself to all had been placed, by that fact, beyond the law. (See *Histoire du Droit Danois*, by Peter Kofoe-ancher, 1776, in-4to, Volume II, page 5.) The ancient law of the Goths, which is thus attached to the Salic law, provides that the woman convicted of the act of Prostitution shall be expelled from the city as unworthy of being a member of the guild, and this shameful expulsion, says the Commentator (J. O. Stiernook, in his book, *De Jure Suconum et Gothorum Betusto*, 1672, page 321), was a sufficient penalty to enable a courtesan to expiate the turpitude of her profession and the infamy of her life. The law of the Ripuarians does not provide the banishment of the ingenua who has abandoned herself to a number of men; but he who is surprised with her (*si quis cum ingenuâ puellâ moechatus fuerit*) is to pay for the others and is not quit of the enormous fine of fifty sous in gold. This fine was returnable, evidently, to the chief of the tribe or king. It is our opinion that the jurisprudence of the Barbarians in the matter of Prostitution is to be formulated in the law of the Visigoths, where a decree of King Recared, who mounted the throne in 586, forbids Prostitution in an absolute fashion and under severe penalties.



Recared was a Catholic, and his decrees were undoubtedly submitted to the bishops, who had mingled the ecclesiastical power with the temporal, and who held as wards those sovereigns whom they had converted; but we have seen from the councils that the Catholic Church conformed to Roman legislation on many moral points and, notably, closed its eyes on public Prostitution. The laws of the Barbarians on the contrary, did not admit this corrupting tolerance and impitiously pursued women of an evil life, who dishonored a whole city where they had their residence and where they practiced their ignoble trade.

The decree of Recared is highly developed and very explicit; it may be considered the general code of Prostitution among the Barbarians, among the Franks of Belgium as well as among the Visigoths of Spain. If a woman or girl of free condition, publicly practicing Prostitution in the city, was recognized as a prostitute (*meretrix agnoscat*) and had frequently been taken in a flagrant act of adultery; if this poor wretch, without any modesty, entered into illicit relations with a number of men in accordance with the custom of her vile trade, she was to be arrested by order of the council of the city and driven out of the city, in the presence of all the people, after having received publicly 300 blows of the lash. She was forbidden for the future to give herself again to be exercised of Prostitution, and the gates of the city were closed to her forever. If she dared to reappear and to begin again her former manner of life, the council of the city was to give her once more 300 blows of the lash and to give her as a slave to some poor man, who was to hold her under rigid surveillance, and who was to prevent her from walking about the city. If it happened that this immodest creature gave herself to debauchery with a knowledge of her father or her mother, in order that her venal amours might procure for her parents a means of livelihood, this infamous father or mother, who lived by the dishonor of their daughter (*pro hac iniquâ conscientia*) was to have 300 blows of the lash.

Every servant maid of dissolute manners received 300 blows of the lash and, after having been shaved, by order of the judge,

was given to her master who was forced to remove her from the city and to keep her in a safe place in order to prevent her from ever returning. In case the master did not care to sell this servant maid and permitted her to reenter the city, he himself was condemned to receive publicly 300 lashes, after which his slave became the property of some poor citizen, in the choice of the king, the judge or the count, and the new master of this vagabond woman took care to prevent her from reappearing in the theatre of her former Prostitution. But in case it happened that this servant was prostituting herself for her master's profit (*ad quirens per fornicationem pecuniam domino suo*), the master shared the shame and penalty of his slave by receiving 300 lashes of the whip. The same rigor was observed in the treatment of those common women arrested in the villages and boroughs and convicted of debauched habits.

The judge who, out of negligence or corruption, failed to execute the decree of Recared, himself incurred a rigorous chastisement and was to be condemned by the council of the city to receive 100 blows of the lash and to pay 30 sous in the form of a fine to his successor.



### CHAPTER III

**T**HE Franks, who have been advancing step by step into Gaul since the middle of the fifth century, did not mix at first with the Romanian Gauls, whom they subjected to their domination; they preserved their own manners, their religion and their customs, without permitting themselves to be influenced by contact by that brilliant and voluptuous civilization which they encountered in the conquered cities; they disdained everything which did not come to them from their ancestors, and they seemed to desire to preserve their savage individuality among the different races, the different religions and the different political States which had been conglomerated in the territory of Gaul. But at the same time, they did not endeavor to change anything in the way of life or the character of the first possessors of the soil; they did not impose upon the latter any forced limitation; they merely did not chance to undergo the influence of proximity and example. The demarcation between the Romanian Gauls and the Barbarians remained so clear that in all the country where the Frankish domination had been established, the Salic law had been set up side by side with the Theodosian code, which had been in use among the Gauls as long as it had in the rest of the Roman Empire. These two systems of legislation, which possessed the force of law, respectively, over the vanquishers and the vanquished, formed a special code of *mundane laws* (*lex mundana*), in which each person found his rights established according to his origin. Later, the code of Theodosius was replaced by that of Alaric II, King of the Visigoths, and later by that of the Emperor Justinian; as to Barbarian jurisprudence, to the Salic law were merely added the laws of the Germans, the Bavarians and the Ripuarians. This rapprochement between two systems of jurisprudence so



diverse and so opposed is clear enough evidence that the Franks had by no means endeavored to subject to their own national code those populations with whom they had avoided mingling. We may see also from this that they do not at all accept on their own account those laws to which their slaves or serfs were used. It is then certain that Prostitution, which enjoyed a legal regime in the Gallo-Romanian cities, continued to exist under the same condition after the conquest of the Franks, without succeeding in corrupting the rude and proud austerity of the conquerors.

The principal chiefs of the Frankish tribes had been called into Gaul by the Catholic bishops, who preferred preserving their authority under the Barbarians to yielding their episcopal seats to Arianism, protected by the Roman municipalities. These Frankish chiefs merely conformed to a secret treaty contracted between the influential members of the Gallic clergy, in respecting the churches, the monasteries and the Christian religion. With their warlike hordes, they did not sojourn in the interior of the cities which they had taken by force, or which voluntarily had opened their gates; they lodged in the neighborhood of these cities, in the villages, on the farms, in the fortified camps, in the vicinity of their chariots laden down with booty; they were always ready to take the field and begin a war; they lived an isolated life and fled all relations with the indigenous Gauls and the Roman colonists. This fusion of races and of manners had only been determined by the conversion of Clovis and his Sicambrians to Christianity. At that time, the Franks were dreaming of taking up their abode in Neustria and Austrasia; at that time, the division of lands and men to the profit of the chiefs of the Frankish nation was creating a new society, which was not slow in enveloping Gallo-Romanian society and in absorbing the latter in its entirety. The Franks, in becoming Christians, became at the same time Gauls and Romans, without ever losing the brevet of their birth and without ceasing to be Barbarians. During more than two centuries, there developed slowly, under the auspices of the Merovingian institutions, this French society, composed of so many diverse elements and bearing in itself the

germs of Christian civilization. From the time of Clovis to that of Charlemagne, the bishops were the true legislators, and the ecclesiastical code dominated the code of Justinian and the Teutonic laws. Prostitution, condemned by the Church, had no regular and legal course; but the disorders of incontinents were the more insuperable and the more audacious. There were not, properly speaking, any courtezans or any prostitutes practicing their shameful trades in the cities governed by the bishops, but there was in every fief (*feudum*), in every rural house (*mansio*), a sort of seraglio, a gynceum, in which free women or serfs labored at the spindle or with the needle, and where the master found facile pleasures and emulation that was always pleased to serve those pleasures. This was concubine Prostitution which replaced every other sort, until marriage was delivered from these parasitic scandals which dishonored it.

The Franks, we have already said, did not know what sensuality was when they descended into Gaul. They only made use of their wives for the purpose of producing children and this for them was to accomplish the highest duty by giving many warriors to their tribes; for, according to the words of the Sophist, Livanus, in his discourse to the Emperor Constantine: "They place all their happiness in war, which seems to be their true element; repose to them is insupportable; their neighbors are never able to persuade them or force them to live tranquilly. These Barbarians are occupied day and night in meditating invasions." They had then no leisure to think of the enervating recreations of pleasure, they whose manners, according to Eusebius (*Life of Constantine*, Book I, Chapter 25), resembled those of wild beasts. Sidonius Apollinaris paints them under colors no less terrible: "Their love for war grows with their years. If they are overcome by numbers or by a disadvantage in position, they yield to death and not to fear. They appear to be invincible, even in defeat, and life is extinguished with them before courage." "They possess no natural propensity for the soft distractions of love. They are not concerned with loving or with being loved by their women," says Tacitus, in speaking of the Germans, who

were not different from the Franks of the fifth century; they piqued themselves solely on being redoubtable and appearing great, hideous and strange in the eyes of their enemies. That is why they tinted their blond hair red, which, shaved on the neck behind and brought down over the top of the head in front, fell in long tresses or was bound up in a tuft on the top of the head. This abundance of hair is an emblem of their physical force and a privilege of their race; they call themselves *hairy warriors*, and they kept of their beards only the fringed mustaches which sometimes hung down all the way to their breasts. As to their ordinary costume, it was not made for a leisurely and voluptuous life; narrow garments of deerskin or buckskin covered their vigorous members and lent themselves to all their supple and agile movements; a large balvarick supported a curved sword called *scramasax*, and a hatchet with two cutting edges hung from their girdles; they never laid aside their arms, even in those nocturnal feasts where the beer filled their cups of black or red earth, each time that they repeated the refrain of one of their warrior songs. They always arrived drunken at the bed of one of their wives or their servants, and they never failed to leave it before it was day, as though it were a shame to see an *ariman* (here *man*, man of war) in the arms of a woman.

The Franks, however, possessed a divinity who presided over marriages or rather over generations; this was Frea, or Frigga, wife of Woden, the Odin of the Scandinavian, the God of War and Carnage.\* She repaired the evils caused by her husband; she gave life, after the latter had given death; she dispensed to the brave, repose and pleasure (*pacem voluptatemque largiens mortalibus*, says Adam de Brême, in his *Ecclesiastical History*). Adam de Brême adds that the worshipers of this Venus of the North represented her under the form of a monstrous phallus (*cejus epiam simulacrum ingenti Priapo*), but he does not cite any other evidence to support this bizarre configuration of the Goddess Frea, and we should be very embarrassed if we attempted by means of the ancient authorities to justify the pres-

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note): Analogous to the Celtic Gwydion.

ence of the Phallus in the religion of the Franks. However this may be, this phallus was but the symbol of libertinism and obscene passions; it represented nothing else than the divine act of generation, and was a characteristic of a creative nature. One might, perhaps, assign to the cult of Frea, rather than to that of Priapus, the majority of phallic traditions which were very widespread in those countries in which the Franks had sojourned and one must see also the Venus of the North in the idols, in the upraised stones, in the trunks of trees cut in the form of the serpent, and in the attributes of Priapus which villagers respected and adored down to the ninth century. There have been discovered, in the ruins of a number of Frankish settlements from the banks of the Rhine, a large number of phalli in bronze and in ivory, which must have been commemorative offerings, presented to Frea by the women rather than by the men. It is only in the idolatry of the Phoenicians that we find Venus, or the female nature, symbolized by a phallus. At the end of the fourth century, when the Goddess Frea, honored by the Franks of Yssel, might have introduced a new sort of Venus into Roman paganism, chapels were dedicated to the two divinities, which were, perhaps, of Frankish origin, and which St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, shows us as concurring in the most secret act of generation. It was Liber and Libera who occupied the same temple, where the sexual part of the man was to be seen placed beside that of the woman, in the form of an image of these divinities who were called the *father* and the *mother*. St. Augustine cites a singular passage from Varro on the subject of the attributes of Liber and Libera, whom we do not hesitate to recognize in the Frea of the Franks: *Liberum a Liberamento appellatum volunt, quod mares in coeundo, per ejus beneficium, emissis seminibus, liberentur. Hoc idem in feminis agere Liberam, quam etiam Venerem putant, quod et ipsas perhibeant semina emittere, et ob hoc Libero eandem virilem corporis partem in templo poni; femineam Liberae.*

But Clovis baptized by Saint Rémy, overthrew the idols which he had adored, and the Franks, following his example, had them-



selves baptized, renouncing the gods of their ancestors. Their Catholicism was for a long time as gross as their idolatry had been; they understood neither the dogma nor the morality of the religion which they had embraced, and which was limited for them to certain practices and certain ceremonies. The bishops always made a successful use of the ecclesiastical authority in mollifying and correcting the manners of these Sicambrians; they were engaged in an incessant struggle with these Barbarians who knew no other law than their own instincts and their own brutal passions; they did not hesitate to excommunicate them, thereby exposing themselves to injury, to evil treatment, even to death, in the effort to hold the rein on neophytes, who were in the habit of abandoning themselves with a savage fury to all excesses, and who made sport, above all, of the sacrament of marriage. The kings, like the *leudes* and the *letes*, kept a number of concubines who succeeded one another, and who sometimes enjoyed a simultaneous reign. Now the Church, basing its position upon the unanimous sentiment of the counsels, permitted every layman a single legitimate spouse or a single concubine, according to the custom of the Roman law, which was a survival of Polytheism. The clergy themselves enjoyed the same privileges, and nothing was more frequent than to see a married bishop or a priest with his concubine. But the Franks did not content themselves with Catholic tolerance, which permitted each one either a wife or a concubine; they did not hesitate to change wives or concubines as often as the desire seized them to form a new union, legitimate or authorized; each would keep, in addition to his rightful wife, a number of concubines who simultaneously shared the master's couch; they had, in the most retired part of the house, a gynaeceum of women or of servant maids (*ancillae*), who gave them children, and who passed into their beds in turn. This was a custom of all the Barbarians, who evidence their nobility and their riches by the number of their wives, their horses and their dogs. Among the poor and the plebeian, marriage was monogamous, for the reason that the husband did not possess the means to possess a number of wives;

but the wife or concubine whom he did possess frequently gave place to another, for divorce did not present any more formalities than did marriage.

We may understand to what degree the Gallic clergy had to combat the disorderly manners of these Barbarians who grew indignant at every restraint, and who saw an intolerable servitude in every prescription of the law, human or divine. The Franks would not suffer the priests to see, judge and condemn that which was hidden on the sanctuary of the domestic fireside; they contributed willingly to all the expenses of religion; they gave generous alms; they gave still more generously for the construction and embellishment of the churches, for the upkeep of the monasteries for the shrines, the reliquaries, the tombs of the saints, but they became indocile and rebellious when their private conduct became an object of reprimands and anathemas on a part of the bishop and the clergy. They did not conform, moreover, to the precepts of the Gospel which looked upon every woman as the equal of the man, regarding the two as one flesh; the woman, according to their idea, was less the companion of man than his slave or his servant, and this servant, this slave, far from being enfranchized by marriage, found in the latter institution merely a heavier yoke and a less easy master. Moreover, all the women among the Franks had accepted this condition of servitude and inferiority, as an attribute of their sex and they were not even grateful to their clergy for the protection which the latter endeavored to extend to them; for the excommunication that struck their husbands or their masters, involved them in its consequences, and exposed them to reprisals which only too often were bloody ones. A Frank, who had repudiated his wife or driven out his concubine, did not hesitate to slay her rather than to take her again in obedience to the injunctions of his bishop, even when he had the air of bowing to the menaces of the Church.

These marriages, these concubine alliances, it is true, were not for the most part consecrated by the religious benedic-

tion; they were consummated in accordance with the Salic law, by means of the sou and the denarius or denier, which the woman received as a symbol of the nuptial contract; this contract, consented to in the presence of witnesses, was not written and signed except in the unusual case in which the husband, the day after the wedding night, assigned a dowry to his bride, by casting a blade of straw upon her breast and by taking the little finger of her left hand. The morning-present (*morghen gabe*) constituted, almost in itself, the bond of a union which had been begun the night before by the concession of a sou in gold and a denier in silver, which the bridegroom had placed in the hand of his wife. This sou and this denarius appeared to have been the general uniform tax (*praemium*) which a woman, whatever her rank was, had to claim as the price of her virginity.

After having accepted of the man the sou and the denarius, the woman looked upon herself as sold to this man, and she no longer belonged to herself, at least until the chains of this servitude had been broken by divorce or by death. We may judge of the submission of a wife to her husband from the terms which she employed in addressing him: "My lord and my husband," she would say, "I, your humble servant (*Domin et jugalis mei, ego ancilla tua*)."

It is thus, in the *Formulas of Marculphus* (Book II, Chapter 27), the woman speaks to her lord and master. There was but a single circumstance in which a married woman might escape the slavery of her position and relieve herself of her abasement. When a girl born of free parents had cast in her lot with that of a serf and had given herself to the latter, out of love or imprudence, she kept the condition of this spouse who was unworthy of her and became a serf like him; but the law of the Ripuarians offered always, for the sake of her family's honor, the means of reconquering her liberty; at the request of a parent or a friend, she might have herself cited before the king or the count, who would interrogate her as to her dishonorable marriage; she would avow the fact and cast herself on the justice of the king or the count. The latter would then order the serf husband to appear and would confront him with

his wife, to whom he presented in silence a distaff and a sword. If the woman chose the distaff, she remained a slave forever and at the mercy of the man whom she had loved enough to sacrifice everything for him. If on the contrary, she took the sword, she became free again by slaying the man who had made her a slave. She effaced thus the shame of her Prostitution in the blood of the one who had been guilty of it, possibly despite himself. The distaff (*concula*) was the emblem of the servile condition which marriage imposed on women. After marriage, they appeared no more in public; they did not frequent the company of men; they never went out except veiled and covered with ample garments, in which their feet and their hands remained always buried; they passed their lives in spinning hemp and wool, in making and dyeing cloth, and in giving birth to and in rearing children. Every time the Merovingian historians introduce us into the apartments of women, even though these women are queens, they picture them to us as occupied in the duties of the household and in needlework, far from curious glances and profane desires.

Concubine alliances, which suited the manners of the Franks, became so multiplied under the kings of the first race that a Frank had to be poor indeed to have but a single wife and two servant maids in his house. The Church winked at these disorders, so long as it might appear to ignore them, and so long as no one appealed to put a stop to it. It pushed its condescension with regard to the masters of the country so far as to permit them to have permanent relations with their female servants, provided they dispensed with all matrimonial formalities; but Salvianus, who was a Gaul and who wrote in the middle of the fifth century, informs us that ecclesiastical tolerance on the subject of concubines had been so ill-interpreted, that the majority of those who lived in concubinage, looked upon themselves as legitimately married and so took no other wives than their servants, with whom they cohabited, observing the duties of a husband (*ad tantam res im prudentiam venit, ut ancillas suas multi uxores putent, atque utinam sicut putantur esse quai conjuges, ita solae haberentur*



*uxores*). Salvianus, in this remarkable passage (*De gubern. Dei*, 1, IX, c. *De concubinis*), says that the Church looked upon concubinage, when he said, in a letter to the Bishop of Narbonne; bond variety of Prostitution; for the man who was content with his concubines imposed a sort of bridle on his desires and kept those desires within the more or less restrained circle of his ancillary amours. These amours, however illicit, found grace before the canonical tribunal, for the reason that they were looked upon as preventing greater disorders and as assuring repose of Christian society. The Pope, St. Leo, towards the end of the fifth century, extended his pontifical mantle over the abusives of concubinage, when he said, in a letter to the Bishop of Narbonne; "Daughters who are married with the authority of their parents have nothing with which to reproach themselves, if the women who possessed their husbands before them were not truly married, for the reason that a married woman is one thing, a concubine is another." It is our opinion that the word *concubine*, at those epochs in which it was so frequently employed and almost always in a good sense, was applied to various degrees of conjugal association; but if this word in the singular possessed ordinarily only a respectable signification, the same word in the plural took on an injurious and indecent sense.

Up to the reign of Charlemagne, according to the Abbot of Cordenoy, in his *History of France*: "The quality of *concubine*, reduced to terms of decency designates a woman married with honor and whose marriage, even though consummated with less formality than those which are called *solemn*, is none the less valid. The best informed of our jurisconsults (Cujas) says that concubinage is a bond so legitimate that a concubine may be accused of adultery as well as a wife; that the law permits one to marry, under the title of concubines, certain persons whom one considers not one's equals through lack of some of the qualities necessary to maintain a full honor of marriage. And that, even when the marriage is something more than concubinage in its dignity and in its civil effects, the name of *concubine* is still one of honor, quite different from that of *mistress*; but that, finally,

the vulgar in France have confounded these two words, from a failure to understand the nature of concubinage, although the institution is in use in many places, where it is called *half-marriage*, and in other terms, *marriage of the left hand*.”\* The Abbot of Cordenoy in relying on the authority of Cejus, has failed to remember that that learned jurisconsult had studied Roman rather than Barbarian law. Concubinage, among the Franks and the Romanian Gauls, who were not slow in imitating their masters did not always possess this character of a half-marriage, assigned it by Roman jurisprudence. It was sufficiently different from a half-marriage, in that it was incessantly renewed, and in that it included sometimes, a certain number of women under the same regime. In some circumstances, it is true, a king, a magnate, a noble who espoused a woman of inferior condition did not accord to her the title of wife but that of concubine, which did not carry with it the implication that a Christian marriage had been celebrated. Ordinarily, the concubine was a servant or a slave who entered the bed of her lord and master. This concubine might claim a sort of nuptial legitimacy in so far as she did not share these most delicate duties with another woman. The Franks, especially the Frankish chiefs, took concubines whom they espoused in the Frankish manner, by means of the sou and the denarius, in order, in case of divorce or repudiation, not to be restrained by the bonds of religious marriage.

The Church had nothing to do with these unions which she had not sanctioned, and if she sometimes meddled with them against her will, when a startling scandal prevented her from preserving neutrality, she did not go into the terrible questions of sacrilege and Christian bigamy, but contented herself with pronouncing judgment on the parties merely on the question of incontinence and fornication. We shall persist in believing that under the first and second race of kings, the woman married according to the rites of the Church was called *wife*, while the

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note): A relic is to be found in the royal morganatic marriage.

woman who was only married according to the Salic law was known as *concubine*: *Secundum legem salicam et antiquam consuetudinem*, say the *Formulas of Marculphus*, on the subject of the sou and the denarius which constituted civil marriage among the Franks.

Concubine alliances were, by their nature, bereft of ecclesiastical sanction, being dependent merely upon the caprice of the persons who formed them according to their fancy and who broke them without scruple. Such was, for more than three centuries, the state of the family in France: by the side of the legitimate wife, who alone was recognized by the Church, there were one or more concubines, to whom the master of the house showed more or less respect by reason of their birth, their conduct or the affection which he had for them. Sometimes these concubines were so numerous under the same roof that the man who kept them and who supported them at his own expense was forced to dismiss some of them in order that they might not all die of hunger. The Salic marriage was only in use for girls of Frankish origin, who married in concubine fashion the men of their own race. These concubines in general were conscious of their inferior position as compared to the woman legitimately married by Catholic rite, while the latter, satisfied with her own rank and her place in her husband's affection, left the others free to play their concubine roles. The children who were the result of these concubine alliances did not possess the same rights as children born of the legitimate wife; but they did possess a semi-legitimacy, and their bastardy carried with it no touch of shame, since they were proud of it, being called the bastards of the house; they remained always in a state of inferiority and respectful submission to their brothers, born of the true wife, who alone represented the hereditary branch, and who alone shared among them the goods of their father. The concubines appeared to possess no other destiny than that of supplementing the insufficiencies of the wife when the latter was forced to be absent from the conjugal couch through menstrual indisposition, through illness or by reason of having to nourish a newborn child. There

were also many degrees among the concubines: some of them, of free condition and Frankish race, were looked upon as being as decently married as though the Church had sanctioned the contract of the sou and the denarius; others, of servile condition and foreign race, might never assume the airs of a legitimate wife. A servant girl who had never done anything but enter the couch of her master, preserved merely a sort of authority over her companions, who showed her some deference; this authority, increased with time, as the master (*dominus*) confirmed it by the good will shown to an aged mistress.

All the women attached to a house, in the quality of wives, concubines and servants, lived together in the interior of the dwelling, where no man might enter without the permission of the master. The place reserved for the women was called *gyneceum*, among the Franks, as among the Romanian Gauls (in Greek, *gynaikeon*). The word *gyneceum* had been corrupted in various ways according to the barbaric dialects which had adopted it, and we see it written *genecium*, *genicium*, *genecaeum*, and *genizeum*, in the low-Latin authors. This place was more or less spacious, according to the importance of the house. It was composed of a number of chambers and included often various work-rooms and a great dormitory, which brought together those of all conditions and all ages. The mistress of the house, whether the wife or the principal concubine, was charged with directing the labors of the *gyneceum*. These labors included more especially those which had to do with the making of cloth, and the manufacturing of vestments. In those times, as in all antiquity, men would have blushed to turn their hands to the work of women (*muliebre opus*), and in the domestic arts, they only applied themselves to the work of the hatchet and the hammer. The ancient glossaries are in agreement on this point, that the preparation of woollens belonged especially to the *gyneceums* of the North; while the spinning of silk was characteristic of those of the midland countries. Papias says that the *gyneceum* is called *textrinum* (workroom), "because the women who gather there work in wool" (*quod ibi conventus feminarum ad opus*



*lanificii exercendum condeniat*). Pollux says that the gynecceum may be called *sayrie*, for the reason that there the women work in silk. These institutions, with an analogous purpose, existed among the Romans of the Eastern Empire; they were even established on a vast scale in Constantinople, and there is no room for doubt that they gave birth to the seraglios of the Mohammedans, which were not so laborious, being devoted exclusively to marriage. Among the Romans of the East, there were gynecceums for the two sexes, who worked separately or together, according to the pleasure of the master; but in these gynecceums there were also slaves, who endured the most rigorous constraint, and were subject to the lash and the rod. The gynecceums of the emperors, the magistrates and the imperial officers, were also penitentiary workshops to which were sent, for a fixed time according to their sentences, poor folk and vagabonds who had committed a crime and who were unable to pay the fine. It is stated in the *Passion* of St. Romain that the Saint was clad in a woollen chemise and locked up in a gynecceum as a sign of contempt (*ad injuriam*). Lactantius, in his book, *On the Death of the Persecutors*, states that the mothers of families and the patrician ladies who were suspected of being converted to the faith of the Christians, were cast in disgrace into a gynecceum (*in gynaeceum repiebandur*).

In the manner of the emperors of Byzantium, the Merovingian and Carlovingian kings had gynecceums in their country houses, and these gynecceums embraced the whole population of women, among whom these sovereigns did not disdain to choose those best suited to the capricious pleasures of the royal couch. The Capitulary, De Villis enumerates the different works which were executed in these vast ateliers, where slaves and eunuchs also labored. "In our gynecceums," says Charlemagne, "is to be found everything that is necessary for labor, that is to say, linen, wool, weld, cochineal, madder, combs, flattening-mills, cards, soap, oil, vases, and all the things that are necessary in that place." Another capitulary in the year 813, adds: "Our women, who are employed in our service (*feminae nostrae quae ad opus nostrum servientes sunt*), draw from our storerooms the wool and

hemp with which they manufacture capes and chemises." We see, in the book of the *Miracles of St. Bertin* (*Acts. S. Bened.*, Volume I, page 131), that young children were apprenticed to the great gyneceums, where they learned to spin, to weave, and to sew and to do all sorts of woman's work (*in genecio ipius nendi, cusandi, texendi, omnique artificio muliedris operis edoctus*). A master, however this may be, was very jealous of the inmates of his gyneceum, and he permitted no one to enter the place, which was protected as a sanctuary in the legislation of the Barbarians. "If anyone," says the law of the Germans, "has slept with the girl of a gyneceum which does not belong to him, and that against the will of this girl, he shall be fined 6 sous in gold (*si cum puellâ de genecio priore concubuerit aliquis contra voluntatem ejus*). The text of the law differs in the manuscript, but the sense does not vary greatly. Charlemagne, in a new edition of this law, merely adds to these capitularies a provision that only an accomplished rape is to be punished and not mere attempt at seduction (*si quis alterius puellam de genecio biolaverit*) and so does away with the uncertainty attaching to that sort of violence which the inmate of the gyneceum might assert had been exerted *against her will*.

It is certain that the gyneceums were not all of the same order, or at least that there were different classes of them, the labors in some being less heavy and less disagreeable than in others. Thus, the rudest labors might be assigned to subordinate slaves, or to the disciplinary workshops. This is not to say, on the other hand, as Ducange endeavors to prove in his *Glossary* (on the word *Gyneceum*), that the majority of the gyneceums were merely supplements to the lupanars and were no more than the foyers of Prostitution. The text which Ducange borrows from the law of the Lombards is not conducive to the deduction which he endeavors to draw from it: "We have decreed that if a woman, under any disguise whatever, is seized in a flagrant act of debauchery (*si femina, quae vestem habet mutatam, maecha deprehensa fuerit*), she shall not be placed in a gyneceum as has been the custom heretofore, since having prostituted herself to

one man, she is not likely to lose the opportunity of prostituting herself to many." This text would seem to prove, on the contrary, that the law looked after the purity of manners in the gyneciums. And yet, the gyneciums, those of the kings in particular, frequently deserved their evil reputation, and in the tenth century, their names even became synonymous with that of a place of debauchery. The master of a house had but to enter into a concubine contract with his servant maids and work women, who disputed the honor of sharing his couch. "If anyone," says Reginon (*De Eccles. discip.*, 1, II, Chapter 5), "consents to commit an adultery in his own house with his servant maids or the inmates of his gynecium. . . ." This passage would tend to indicate that the gyneciums, in addition to servants, admitted women pensioners, who hired themselves out under certain conditions. The upkeep of a gynecium must have cost very dearly; the 75th chapter of the synod of Meaux, cited by Ducange, speaks of laymen who had chapels in their houses, and who felt authorized on that account to levy tithes which enabled them to support their dogs and the women of their gyneciums (*inde canes et gyneciarias suas pascant*). The gyneciums came to restrict their ambitious proportions as manufactures were established and commerce, by distributing its products everywhere, rendered futile the making of a hoard of woven goods and other objects in individual dwellings. But the life of women did not cease to be of a communal nature, and despite the emancipation which Knighthood brought them under certain solemn circumstances, their private lives remained walled in; the only difference was that there were no longer any concubines in these family sanctuaries, where the legitimate wife, surrounded by her servant maids and her children, now set an example of labor, decency and virtue.

## CHAPTER IV

THE kings of the first race were engaged in an incessant struggle with the Church, on account of their concubines, whom they took and repudiated in turn, without consulting the bishops; while the latter, despite their threats and their anathemas, could not succeed in bringing the Franks to respect the religious institution of marriage; for the new converts remained pagans in their manners and bore with reluctance the evangelic yoke. The history of these kings is full of their wars, of their crimes and excesses; but it was especially in their amours that they had cause to complain of the importunate policing of the ecclesiastical powers, which granted them neither peace nor truce, and which refused to tolerate their setting an example of Prostitution. However, the scandal remained ordinarily hidden in the bosom of the gynæceum, and public rumor barely revealed what took place inside. When an echo of these carryings-on had come to the ears of the confessor, the latter would arm himself with his excommunicatory thunders and forbid the sinner to approach the Holy Table until he had purified his couch and broken with the feminine devil. We cannot understand the excesses of the Frankish kings with their concubines until we come to read, in Gregory of Tours, the naïve account of the marriages of King Clotaire, son of Clovis, who had seven wives or admitted concubines. “He had for wife Ingonde, and he loved her singly, until she made this request of him: ‘My lord has done with me what he would; he has received me into his bed; now, as the climax to his favors, I would that my lord the King should listen to what his servant demands of him. I beg you to seek for my sister, your slave, a man capable and rich who will elevate her in place of debasing her, and who will give me the means of serving you with still greater fidelity.’ At these words, Clotaire, already all too inclined to pleasure, became inflamed with



love for Aregonde, betook himself to the country where she resided, and attached her to him by marriage. Then he returned to Ingonde and said to her: 'I have labored to procure for you this supreme favor which you have demanded of me, and in seeking a man rich and wise who deserves to be united to your sister, I have found none better than myself. Know then, that I have taken her for a wife; I hope this does not displease you?' —'What appears good to the eyes of my master,' replied Ingonde, 'let him do; only may his servant always live in the grace of her King!' This curious picture of manners shows us how things went in the gynaeceums of the kings.

The sons of Clotaire I were like him, polygamous, and more than him given to incontinence and adultery. The elder, Caribert, King of Paris, was married to Ingoberge, who was elevated by her illustrious birth above her rivals: "She had in her service two young girls, daughters of a poor artisan; one, named Marciovieve, wore the religious habit; while the other was called Meroflede, and the King was hopelessly in love with her. Ingoberge, jealous of the interest which these others inspired in the King, conceived the idea of depreciating the two sisters by calling to Caribert's attention the service condition of their father, who was engaged in carding wool in the paddock of the palace; but Caribert, irritated against his wife, who had thought to make him blush, proceeded to repudiate her, and took successively, Meroflede and Marciovieve; but he was not content with this; he soon came to prefer another servant, named Theudechilde, whose father was a shepherd. This latter, although a concubine of the lowest order, came into the possession of the treasure of Caribert when this Prince died without leaving an heir in the arms of Theudechilde, Marciovieve and Meroflede, who shared his last caresses between them. The brothers of Caribert, possessed also, in the same degree, the vice of incontinence. Gontran, King of Orleans and of Burgundy, devout man as he was, changed wives as often as Caribert, and kept concubines of low extraction without being troubled by the bishops, who called him the *good* Gontran (*bonus*), in his amours. Chilperic, King of

Soissons, is the one to whom contemporary chroniclers attribute the largest number of wives, married in accordance with the law of the Franks, by means of the ring, the sou and the denarius. One of these wives, named Audowere, had in her service Fredegonde, a young girl of Frankish origin, as remarkable for her beauty as she was for her astuteness. Chilperic had no sooner seen her than he was greatly taken with her; but Fredegonde was possessed of too much ambition to be satisfied with the role of a subordinate concubine. Audowere, being brought to bed of child in the absence of the King her husband, Fredegonde, acting in concert with a bishop whom she had won over to her side, abused the simplicity of the Queen by persuading her to hold her own infant over the baptismal font. Now the character of godmother was incompatible with that of wife, according to the doctrine of the Church. When Chilperic came back from war, all the women of the royal house went forth to meet him, bearing flowers and singing his praises. Fredegonde was the first to present herself. "With whom will my lord sleep this night?" she asked him boldly (*Cum qua dominus mæus rex dormiet hac nocte?*); for the Queen, my mistress, is now your majesty's godmother, being the godmother of her own daughter."—"Ah, well!" responded Chilperic jovially, "If I cannot sleep with her, I shall sleep with you." Audowere came to him with her child in her arms. "Woman," the King said to her, "you have committed a crime in the simplicity of your mind; you are my godmother, and can no longer be my wife." He repudiated her upon the spot, and she at once went to take the veil in a convent. Fredegonde did not occupy the place of Audowere more than a few months. Chilperic demanded in marriage Galeswinde, daughter of the King of the Goths, and in order to obtain the hand of this Princess, he repudiated his wives and dismissed his mistresses, even Fredegonde, whom he had not ceased to love. But he was not slow in coming back to this beautiful concubine and in sacrificing the Queen to her, causing the Queen to be strangled as she slept. Fredegonde, whom he afterwards married, involved him in a

net of pleasures, which put him at the mercy of his criminal companion.

Such is the history of nearly all the Merovingian kings, who did not recoil from murders or bloody slaughterings to serve their loves and to obtain or to keep a concubine. They lived in their royal domains, far from the eyes of their subjects, who barely caught an echo of the orgies of these slothful kings, given over to debauchery and constantly falling into drunkenness and lust. The interior life of the palace was but a mire of Prostitution, into which Frankish royalty sank deeper and deeper. Dagobert I, who possessed a number of kingly qualities, was not more continent than his predecessors, and his minister, St. Eloy did not appear to concern himself with the private manners of this Prince, who built churches, founded monasteries and covered with gold the relics of the tombs of the saints, but who, at the same time, had a throng of concubines, in the manner of King Solomon (*luxuriae supramodum deditus, tres habedat instar Salomonis reginas naxime et plurimas concubinas*, says Fredegair, in his *Chronicle*). The bishops were tireless in anathematizing the kings and princes for their disorderly conduct; they exposed themselves courageously to the wrath of these too often incorrigible libertines. They did not fear either death or martyrdom, when it was a question of defending the sanctity of Catholic marriage against the audacities of pagan concubinage. Praetextat, Bishop of Rouen, was thus massacred by an emissary of Fredegonde; Didier, bishop of Vienne, was stoned by order of Brunehault; St. Lambert was assassinated by one Dodon, who would not forgive him for having endeavored to separate the Prince Pepin from his concubine Alpais. "St. Lambert," says the *Chronicles of St. Denis* (in 708), "reproved the Prince Pepin for keeping Alpais, a lady who was not his wife, in addition to Plectude, his proper wife. The brother of this Alpais, named Dodon, killed St. Lambert merely because the Saint had reproved Pepin for his sin." The bishops and the priests, whom Prostitution, or rather, the resulting scandal, always had to reckon among its implacable adversaries, were not always free of blame

in the reproaches which they addressed to their neighbors, and which sometimes fell upon their own heads. Gregory of Tours pictures for us, under the most odious colors (Books VIII and IX), Bertchram, Bishop of Bordeaux, who corrupted servant maids, married women, and who even dishonored the royal couch. At the moment St. Colomban, Abbot of Luxeuil, was hastening to the court of Theodoric II, King of Burgundy, to make the latter blush for his adulteries, and to invite him to expel his concubines, Pope Gregory I was writing to Queen Brunehault, enjoining her to punish the immodest and perverse priest (*sacerdotes impudici ac nequiter conversantes*). It was Brunehault who had perverted her young grandson, Theodoric II, by surrounding him with concubines and by setting him an example of the most infamous debauchery. The two queens, Brunehault and Fredegonde, rival one another in their vices and their crimes till they reach the age when the fires of concupiscence were extinguished; they appeared to be endeavoring to see who could acquire the more lovers, who could be the more ardent in her debaucheries and who would be the last to leave the amorous lists. It was Brunehault who died the first, at the tail of a runaway horse, borne across the fields and cut to pieces after having been promenaded nude upon a camel's back for three days, a butt to the outrage of the soldiers of Clotaire II, son of Fredegonde.

We shall not follow all the kings of the first and second race in the long and monotonous list of their adulteries and misdeeds; but to show how the custom of keeping concubines had relaxed the conjugal bond, we shall recall the fact that Charlemagne, that wise and glorious monarch, who was the support and honor of the Church, had four legitimate wives and five or six concubines, without counting a multitude of transient mistresses. His concubines, with all of whom Eginhard does not make us acquainted, were not, like his wives, of noble and princely origin; Eginhard merely names Maltegarde, Gersuinde, Regina, and Adallinde, who gave him many children whom he caused to be reared under his own eyes. "His daughters were very beautiful," says Eginhard, "and tenderly beloved of their father. It



is therefore a matter of astonishment that he never cared to marry one of them, either to one of his own people, or to strangers. Up to the time of his death, he kept them all by his side in the palace, saying he could not do without their society. Thus, while he was happy in other respects, he incurred in connection with his daughters, the malignity of fortune. But he dissimulated his chagrin, as though there had never been any suspicion against them, and as though rumor had not busied itself with their conduct." This singular passage, in which the historian is evidently embarrassed, is undoubtedly insufficient to prove that Charlemagne had incestuous relations with his own daughters; but it gives room for interpretations the least favorable to the morality of this great Emperor. Tradition would have it that one of the daughters of Charles, named Imma, had married Eginhard, who would not have failed to boast of it if he had been the son-in-law of so redoubtable a master. It is in the capitulary of the Abbot of Lorsch, written in the twelfth century, that this legend is recounted as an authentic fact. Eginhard loved Imma, who had been affianced to the King of the Greeks; Imma loved him also with a passion which only grew with time. One evening, he went to knock gently at the door of Imma's chamber; she opened and received him, and they forgot the hour in a long interview; she abandoned herself to the kisses of her lover (*statim versa vice solus cum solâ secretis usus colloquiis, et datis amplexibus cupito satisfecit amori*). Day comes and Eginhard tears himself from the arms of his mistress, and is about to depart, when he perceives that all the exits are blocked: it has snowed during the night and the footprint of a man on the snow would be an accusing proof of his nocturnal sojourn in Imma's apartment. The young girl, rendered audacious by love, thinks of an expedient; she offers to bear Eginhard on her shoulders to the place in the palace where he lodged. She promised to return to her chamber by the same route, following her own footprints. Charlemagne, who had not slept that night, had risen before dawn and was looking out into the courtyard of the palace. Suddenly, he sees his daughter advanc-

ing tremblingly under the weight of a burden which she deposits with relief, hastily returning to her apartment. This burden was Eginhard, but the snow preserved no other footprints than those of Imma. Charlemagne, seized at once with astonishment and grief, kept silence as to what he had seen. Imma refused to wed the King of the Greeks, and Eginhard demanded of the Emperor to be sent on a distant mission as a recompense for his ancient services. Charlemagne could contain himself no longer, but had him brought before the tribunal of counts and barons; he had resolved, however, to pardon him. "I shall not inflict on my servant," he said, "a penalty which would augment rather than palliate the dishonor of my daughter! I judge it more worthy of us, and more convenient to the glory of the Empire to pardon them in favor of their youth, and unite them in legitimate marriage, covering thus with a veil of decency the shame of their misdeed." Eginhard is brought in; he comes forward, trembling under the gaze of the Emperor. "It is time to recognize your past services," Charlemagne says to him, "and to recompense your devotion to my person, by the most magnificent gift possible. I therefore accord you my daughter, your porter (*vestram scilicet portatricem*) who, girding her robe about her loins, has been so pleased to serve you as a mount (*quae quandoque alte succincta vestrae subvectioni satis se morigeram exhibuit*)."

This gracious legend, based upon a tradition almost contemporary with the fact which it commemorates, appears to us to possess a certain analogy with that capitulary in which Charlemagne, in banishing from his dominions women of an evil life, inflicts on the imprudent or debauched person who shall give asylum to one of these, the shame of bearing her on his back to the market-place where she was to be fustigated. The narrative contained in the cartulary of Lorsch permits us to suppose that Charlemagne was alluding to the penalty incurred by a man for opening his house to a prostitute, when he ordered Eginhard to marry his *porter*. The adventure of Imma and Eginhard, according to tradition, took place in the palace at Aix-la-Chapelle,

and it was precisely in this residence, in the year 800, that the capitulary was decreed which assigned to the accomplices of Prostitution a chastisement in which is to be found a reminiscence of Imma bearing Eginhard. Might we not suppose that Charlemagne had made his capitulary after having been the witness of the bizarre spectacle on that snowy morning when he had seen a young man carried by a young woman? Perhaps he did not recognize the actors in this amorous episode; perhaps he was at a loss to explain at first the designs of the two mysterious persons who made their way so slowly across the snow. The conjecture is permissible in view of an historic comparison, suggested to us by the capitulary addressed to those officers charged with guarding the palace, a capitulary in which we also find the origin of the functions of the provost of the *hôtel du roi* and those of the office of *king of the ribaldries*. Charlemagne ordered each officer of the palace (*ministerialis palatinus*) to make a close census to see if any unknown man or any dissolute woman (*meretricem*) might not be hidden among the inmates of the house. In case any woman or man of this sort was discovered, he or she was to be prevented from fleeing, and the suspected person was to be kept under guard until the Emperor had been advised. As to the one in whose company such a man or such a woman had been found, if he was unwilling to make honorable amends, he was to be expelled from the imperial palace. The Emperor addressed the injunctions to the officers of his well-beloved wife and his children. This capitulary, in which there is question of an unknown man and a prostitute lodged unlawfully in the royal palace, might have been provoked by a special circumstance coinciding well enough with the story of Imma and Eginhard. The unknown man was he; the prostitute was she.

The rest of the capitulary is of a more general character, although it also relates to this minute search to determine the character of persons inhabiting the royal domain of the city of Aix-la-Chapelle. Radbert, collector of the royal revenues (*actor*), is enjoined to make a minute search in the houses of

the Emperor's serfs, at Aix as well as on the farms which were dependencies of the royal residence. Pierre and Gunzo are charged with making a similar visit to the *escraignes* (*scruas*) and the cabins of the serfs; Ernaldus shall visit also the shops of the merchants, Christians or Jews, choosing a time when the proprietor shall not be present. It is certain that this minute search in the palace of Aix and its dependencies resulted in the discovery of one or more suspected individuals. As a result, Charlemagne forbids all those who have a post in the palace, to receive or hide any man, who shall have committed a theft, a homicide, an adultery, or any other crime, or who shall have come there to commit such a crime. Whoever dares to infringe the order of the Emperor, if he is a free man, must bear the malefactor upon his back to the market-place, where the guilty one shall be placed in the pillory. But in case a serf shall have disobeyed the imperial proscription, this serf, shall bear the malefactor to the pillory, and from there he shall be led to the market-place to be fustigated as he has merited. "Similarly, in what concerns debauchees and prostitutes (*de gadalibus et meretricibus*)," adds the capitulary, "we desire that they shall be borne by those who have given them shelter to the market-place, where they shall be fustigated. If the guilty party refuses to bear the woman of evil life who has been found in his house, we order that he be beaten with rods along with her, and on the same spot." This capitulary, which establishes the interior policing of the palace, indicates the repugnance which Charlemagne felt for women of depraved manners, since he restrains them, not merely from his own residence and domains, but even from the roof of the humblest serf and the domiciles of Jews, here designated as the courtiers of Prostitution. Charlemagne, as we have already said, did not always preserve an exemplary reserve on his own account, and he had great sensual needs to satisfy. It is generally known that this Emperor, whom the romances and the *chansons de geste* picture to us as a giant, a



*la barbe grifaigne*,\* was more than a head taller than his knights, being not less than seven feet in height; his strength was excessive; and we may judge, from the *pied de roi*, what was the length of his foot, which established a measure that the metric system only recently displaced; but it is impossible for us, with respect to this measure (*pedale, mensura pedis*), to enter upon a delicate controversy respecting the true origin of the royal *foot*. We shall limit ourselves to remarking that in the Middle Ages, comparative proportions were established between various portions of the body; and the foot, from the highest antiquity, bore witness to the virility of a man, while with the woman, it had a signification still more indiscreet; it is in this sense that Horace speaks of a vile feminine foot in his first satire: *Depygis, nasuta, brevi latere ac pede longo est*. We shall refer the curious to what has been called the stature of Charlemagne and its accessories in the *Philoponema* of Marquard Freher, reprinted by Duchesne, Bouquet and Pertz. This monstrous stature justifies what tradition tells us of his amours. A very original legend, gathered by Petrarch, at Aix-la-Chapelle, where everything is filled with memories of the great Emperor, informs us that this monarch, who was later canonized, had his temptation like St. Anthony, and fell more than once into sin through the evil works of the Devil. Charles, falling hopelessly in love with a certain woman, whom Petrarch does not otherwise designate, suddenly forgot with her the interests of his people and the glory of his reign. He had no other thought than to live for his mistress. She died suddenly. He yielded then to a despair which nothing could calm and remained night and day beside the mortal remains, which he could not bear to commit to the earth. He did not cease to embrace the cadaver, which was already the prey of corruption. The Archbishop of Cologne, a venerable prelate, to whom the Emperor accorded ordinarily a blind confidence, was unable to console him or to get him away from his

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\**grifaigne* is equivalent to *menacante* (threatening). J. U. N. adds: "Gothic *grif* or Latin *gryphus* originally meant hooked or clawed. There is possibly a connection here; reference being to a beard pointed to resemble a claw or hook."

dead love; so he began to pray, and God revealed to him the nature of the obstinate love which Charles had for this woman. There had been put into the mouth of this woman a constellated stone, chased in a ring, and this talisman, invincibly bound the Emperor to the body, dead or living, which possessed this ring. Barely was the talisman out of the corpse's mouth when Charlemagne felt his love vanish, and demanded why they had left this mass of corruption under his eyes. But suddenly, Charles was taken with a tenderness—quite different it is true—for the prelate who bore the talisman. He was unable to leave the latter, and would not permit the prelate to budge from his side. The Archbishop, in order to free himself of this servitude, hurled the talisman into the neighboring lake of Aix-la-Chapelle. The ring, at the bottom of the lake, lost nothing of its power, and continued to inspire in Charlemagne the same passion, which merely changed its object. Charles was then in love with the lake, and would not leave it; he fixed his residence there and established there the seat of his Empire, ordering in his will that his sepulchre should be placed where, from the depths of his tomb, he could hear the lake murmuring amorously to the echoes of his immortal name.

Charlemagne was on too good terms with the Church to have anything to fear from its admonitions; he avoided, moreover, with much prudence, all occasions of scandal, and everything which had to do with his concubines and mistresses remained hidden in the depths of the royal gynæceum. He refused to tolerate in his subjects that relaxation of manners which the episcopal authorities denounced to him, confessing himself powerless to correct the situation. It was to fortify this authority that he drew up in 805, a capitulary which forbade persons of either sex, under pain of sacrilege, to commit adulteries, fornications, sodomies, incests, or other sins against marriage. The Emperor explained his prohibitions by observing that those countries whose populations were given to illicit pleasures, to adulteries, to the turpitudes of Sodom and to commerce with Prostitutes were neither constant in the faith nor courageous in war

(*multae regiones, quae jam dicta inlicita et adulteria vel sodomiam luxuriam vel commixtionem meretricum sectatae*). As a result, whoever was convicted of these excesses, lost his rank and his rights, by going to prison to await the day of public penitence. We are surprised at not finding in the capitularies of Charlemagne, any precautionary or rigorous measure against the lenocinium which was called the *lenonia* and which had survived the persecution of the Theodocian and Justinian Codes. There is, however, a capitulary of uncertain date, which seems to concern the *lenonia*, although this shameful trade was not clearly called to the attention of the magistrates. In this capitulary (Baluz., Volume I, page 545), in which the priests, the deacons and the other clerics are forbidden to receive any foreign woman (*extraneam*) in their domicile, in which the monks and the clerics are forbidden to enter the hostelrys to eat and drink there, we remark the following article: *Ut mangones et cociones et nudi homines qui cum ferro vadunt non sinantur vagari et deceptiones hominibus agere*. We are none too sure as to what manner of *naked* men these could be who bore a sword, and we are not averse to believing that there has been an alteration in the text; the word *nudi*, which has no sense might be replaced by *nundi*, which we with some doubt would translate as *foreign*. This article would thus mean: "Jockeys, courtiers and foreign merchants, who bear arms, shall no longer be permitted to go here and there, making dukes." It would be easy to demonstrate, in the course of a philological dissertation, that the low-Latin employed the word *mangones* in the sense of *jockeys*, *knaves* and *procurers*, rather than in the sense of *lackeys* and *thieves*; *mango* had succeeded *leno*. As to *cociones*, which must be translated literally by *coyons*, they were couriers of the vilest species. A writer of the tenth century (*Nic. Specialis, De reb. sicul.*), cited by Ducange, says that thieves were not designated by the generic term, *mangones*, until about this period. Ducange says always that the *cociones* are synonymous with jockeys, hucksters and second-hand dealers who went about

the fairs and who only busied themselves with shameful commerce.

The lenons certainly existed, even though they were hidden under other names; it might be proved, for example, that throughout the Middle Ages the jockeys or horse dealers did not limit themselves to buying and selling horses, mules and asses; they trafficked still more lucratively in Prostitution. But it is a fact remarkable enough that the expressions, *lenocinium* and *lenonia*, *leno* and *lenarius*, *lena*, and *lenaria*, are very rarely employed by the Catholic writers of Merovingian and Carolingian France. In the absence of the word, we do not believe that we are, therefore, to deduce the absence of the fact. Thus, in applying historical criticisms to a legend of the seventh century, we come upon a lenon, numbered among the saints, under the name of Lenogesilus. It appears to us incontestable that this word was formed from *leno* and from *Gesilus*, which would have been the name of the person, whereas *leno* was but descriptive of his quality. This Lenogesilus, who lived in the time of Clotaire II (619), attracted (*traduxit*) into his cell a virgin named Agneflede and caused her to take the veil; they dwelt together and fought valiantly in the ways of the Lord (*strenue Domino militant*). The Devil was jealous of the happiness of these two sheep, and he breathed in the ear of the King that a certain Lenogesilus, having seduced a virgin by magic, was living with her in impiety and debauchery (*modo legitima conjugia violantes inter se invicem nefandis studiis commiscentur*). Clotaire summoned the two supposed accomplices, but was wholly edified by a miracle which manifested the innocence of Lenogesilus. This holy man, in arriving at the palace of the King, who was absent, complained of cold; he sent for fire to those who tended the bake-ovens; but Agneflede had nothing in which to carry this fire. "Take your mantle!" he said to her, smiling on the bakers. Agneflede held up the hem of her robe and received the burning coals without the robe being burned or even singed. Those who had been witnesses of the miracle reported it to the King, who loaded Lenogesilus and Agneflede with presents and



sent them both back to their cell. It is thus that the lenon Gesilus becomes St. Lenogesilus in the legend preserved by the Bollandists; as for his companion, Agneflede, she did not have, like him, the honor of being canonized.

The successors of Charlemagne probably drew up a number of capitularies against Prostitution which we no longer possess; for J. Dutillet, who had at his disposition the *Tresor des Chartes*, and who has edited his *Receuil des Rois de France* after the original sources, says that the first concern of Louis-le-Debonnaire, after the death of his august father, "was to cleanse and reform the said court of that ordure, knowing that it infected the whole Empire or realm." A capitulary which we still possess (Baluz., Volume II, col. 1198 and 1563) adds a bizarre custom to the penalty for libertinism. Every woman convicted of having led a scandalous life, was by it condemned to run about the country for forty days, nude from her head to her girdle, with a sign on her forehead announcing the reason for her condemnation. Anyone had the right to accuse a woman of Prostitution, adultery, or any other misdeed. The judge listened to the accusation and took cognizance of it; but the role of accuser carried with it certain inconveniences which tended to disgust those most inclined to this species of vengeance. The accuser was under the necessity of proving his charges by means of a judiciary proof, by the cross, by boiling water, by hot iron, or by combat. The accused woman was represented by a champion whom she paid conditionally. This champion, however, assured he might be of his client, never underwent these tests on which depended the justification or condemnation of one of the parties, without some disquietude. Among these tests, that of the cross was the least dangerous and depended less on chance than on the bodily strength of the parties. Those of the two adversaries, who, with a cross on his back, held it for the longest time in the attitude of Jesus crucified, won the case; the other paid a fine and endured the punishment which went with the crime of which he had accused another. Sometimes the accused woman, unable to find a champion who would expose himself to

the test, was obliged to undergo them herself, and no account was taken of her sex or her bodily weakness. It was especially in the test of the cross, that a woman, however weak she might be, sometimes had the advantage. Thus, this test was employed by preference, when a husband, accused of impotence by his wife, might prove that he had done his conjugal duty. The proof by congress was not still in existence at the time the council of Verberia (757) formulated this canon, in which the separation of the impotent husband from his wife is decreed: *Si qua mulier proclamaverit quod vir suus nunquam cum ed coisset; exeant inde ad crucem, et si verum fuit, separentur*. The Empress Judith herself, being accused of adultery with Bernard, Count of Barcelona, offered to justify herself by fire or by combat; but her enemies, who were none other than the sons of her husband, Louis-le-Debonnaire, recoiled before such a mode of possible justification and forced their father and their stepmother to retire each to a convent. Sometimes a woman accused of debauchery, preferred, although innocent, to submit to the penalty rather than to expose herself to the terrible test by judiciary duel.

One of the most remarkable examples of these tests in the case of Prostitution took place about this time (858), on the occasion of the divorce of Lothair, King of Lorraine. This Prince, the second son of the Emperor Lothair, had loved a young girl named Waldrade, reared in the imperial gynceum of Aix-la-Chapelle, before he had married Theutberge, daughter of the Count Boson; but he could not accustom himself to living apart from his ancient mistress, and so he returned to a place near her in one of his Alsatian domains and, when Waldrade had given him a son, he desired to break his legitimate marriage. Witnesses appeared who accused Theutberge of having had incestuous relations with her brother, Hucbert, of having become pregnant by him, and of having done away with her offspring. These witnesses, evidently incited by Lothair and Waldrade, pretended to be so well informed regarding the secret details of this incest, that they attributed to Hucbert the most abominable impurities, while failing to explain how Theutberge, who had abandoned

herself to him, had been able to conceive a child. Following are the strange details into which the venerable Hincmar does not fear to enter (*Opera*, Volume I, page 568): *Frater suus cum ed masculino concubitu inter femora, sicut solent masculi in masculos turpitudinem operari, scelus fuerit operatum, et inde ipsa conceperit. Quapropter, ut celaretur flagitum, potum hausit et partum abortivit.* The *Annals* of Saint-Bertin confirm the same fact, without leaving us to understand that an unnatural copulation had borne fruit: *Fratrem suum Hucbertum sodomitico scelere sibi commixtum.* The Queen Theutberge chose a champion, or *vicar*, who submitted in her behalf, to the judgment by hot water. The vicar heard mass, went to communion, changed his apparel for the tunic of a deacon, drank a mouthful of holy water and waited till the water was boiling in the cauldron; a stone having been dropped into it, he plunged his arm into the hot water and drew out the stone; his arm was immediately wrapped in a sack, on which the judge fixed his seal; at the end of three days the sack was opened, and the arm being found intact, Theutberge was justified and returned to the royal couch.

But Lothair and Waldrade still wanted a divorce. They contested the validity of the test and demanded a new and more decisive one. Finally, to cut matters short, Lothair, in the month of January, 860, convoked sixty devout men in a solemn consistory over which he himself presided at his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle. Theutberge appeared before this assemblage and confessed that her brother, Hucbert, had, as a matter of fact, abused her by employing violence (*non tamen sua sponte, sed violenter sibi inlatum*, say the Acts of the council of Aix, *Conc. de Labbe*, Volume XIII, col. 696). In a second consistory, assembled the following month, Theutberge appeared once more and renewed her confession. "I now confess," she said, "that my brother, the clerk Hucbert, has corrupted me from my earliest infancy and has committed on my person, immodest acts against nature (*trofiteor quia germanus meus Hucbertus clericus me adolescentulam corrumpit et in meo corpore, contra naturem usum, fornicationem exercuit et perpetravit*). Theutberge was condemned

to quit her husband and to do penance in a monastery, but she soon retracted her confession and addressed to Pope Nicolas I a protest against the condemnation to which she had been unjustly subjected. The Pope charged two bishops to restrain King Lothair from "rotting in the sty of lust (*in luxuriæ stercore putrefieri*, says the letter of Nicolas I)" and to direct the operations of a council which assembled at Metz to act as a court of last resort in this affair. The council confirmed the sentence of the first judges. Then the pope hurled an anathema at King Lothair. "If ever," he said, "one might call *king* one who, far from subduing his appetites by a salutary régime, yields to the illicit impulses of an enervating lubricity. . . ." He revoked the decision of the council of Metz by declaring that "It is less a council than a place of prostitution, since it favors adultery (*tanquam adulteris faventem prostibulum appellari decernimus*)." Lothair paid no attention to the anathema of the holy father, and kept Waldrade; but the Pope appealed to all sovereigns and all kings to combat King Lothair with temporal and spiritual arms. "The layman who has at the same time a wife and a concubine, is excommunicated," wrote Nicolas and his partisans in tracts which shook Christendom. "One may not dismiss his legitimate wife in order to take another or to replace her with a concubine. It is not permitted to repudiate one's wife under any pretext, except for cause of fornication." To these formulas of the canonical law Lothair made response that his wife had been a prostitute before their marriage. Adon, Archbishop of Vienne, then replied: "A husband is not entitled to demand a divorce when he has married a woman already deflowered, after he has lived with her for a long time without the least recrimination."

Lothair persisted in his concubinage with Waldrade; but he saw himself menaced by the armies of his neighbors, while that Hucbert, to whom he had attributed such vile habits, had left his Abbey of Saint-Maurice et Saint-Martin to come and demand an explanation from his brother-in-law of the atrocious calumnies concerning his sister and himself. Hucbert was slain at the moment of victory, and an envoy of the Pope came to summon Lo-



thair to be reconciled with his legitimate spouse and to expel his concubine. Lothair yielded; but he had no sooner taken back Theutberge than she fled a second time to Charles the Bald for safety. Nicolas I solemnly excommunicated Lothair, who put up a last show of resistance by accusing his wife of adultery, and offering to prove the accusation by duel. This extreme measure did not succeed, and he sent back his dear Waldrade to the Abbey of Remiremont. Nicolas had called him to Rome to be relieved of his excommunication; Lothair learned en route that Nicolas was dead and that Adrian II had succeeded him. This new Pope was not less inflexible than his predecessor; he awaited King Lothair in the convent of Mont Cassin and made him swear, before admitting him to the Holy Table, that he had not had with the excommunicated Waldrade, any cohabitation, carnal intercourse or relations of any sort. Lothair, although he had three children by his concubine, swore brazenly all that the Pope desired. The latter, in presenting the bread and wine to the perjured King, said to him once more: "If you feel yourself innocent of the crime of adultery, if you are possessed of a firm resolution not to cohabit more with your concubine Waldrade, approach with confidence and receive the pledge of eternal salvation for the remission of your sins; but if you propose to wallow again in the mire of Prostitution (*ut ad mechae dolutabrum redeas*, say the *Annals of Metz*) beware of taking any part in the Sacrament, lest this remedy of the soul be your condemnation." Lothair committed the sacrilege and hastened to depart to go find Waldrade; but he never saw her again, being overtaken on the way by a sudden death, which alone prevented him from falling back into the disorders of his former life (August 6, 869). Concubinage, authorized by the Salic law and the other codes of the Barbarians, had resisted for more than three centuries the discipline of the Catholics, and that equality of the woman with the man which had been proclaimed by the Gospel; and now at length it found itself established in the institution of Christian marriage.

## CHAPTER V

WE MUST come down to the reign of Louis VIII in order to discover an ordinance of the king relative to Prostitution; but we are not to conclude from the absence of special regulations on the matter for more than three centuries that the state of manners rendered such regulations unnecessary, and that public Prostitution had disappeared in France under the moralizing influence of the Church. In the lack of these monuments of ancient jurisprudence, which may perhaps have existed, but which are no longer to be found in collections of royal documents, we still are able to determine from the testimony of contemporaries, that manners were never more corrupt, and that there had never been a greater need of reform, repression and amendment. During this period of wars, invasions and social upheaval, the works of legislation are very rare, and are distinguishable by a transient character which prevented them from surviving the circumstances which gave them birth; there is no general code which bears witness to the desire to lay a stable foundation, such a desire as is to be found in the Capitularies of Charlemagne and the establishments of St. Louis. The kings succeeded one another too rapidly and felt that they were too uneasily seated upon their thrones to dream of organizing, moralizing, ameliorating and administering their States; they had neither the time nor the desire to modify the institutions of their predecessors; one might therefore say, with every appearance of certitude, that from the time of Charlemagne to St. Louis, the policing of Prostitution was at a standstill and underwent no metamorphosis, whereas Prostitution, itself, encouraged by the indifference of the magistrates, did not cease to spread and take root among the people. We shall not endeavor to discover traces of legal precautions, of coercive and prohibitive regulations in the interest of public man-

ners; but we shall, nevertheless, have little difficulty in proving that those manners were detestable in this epoch of barbarism, ignorance, brutality and universal disorder.

The most shameful corruption had penetrated the majority of convents at the time of the Merovingians. In 742, St. Boniface, Bishop of Mayence, wrote to Pope Zachary (Act. SS. ord. L. Bened., Vol. II, page 54): "The bishoprics are almost always given to laymen avid of wealth or to debauched and prevaricating clerics, who enjoy them in worldly fashion. I have found among those who are called deacons, men accustomed from infancy to debauchery, adultery and the most infamous vices; they have by night four or five concubines in their beds, and even more (*inveni inter illos diaconos quos nominant, qui a pueritia sua semper in stupris, semper in adulteriis et in omnibus semper spurcitiis viam ducentes, sub tali testimonio venerunt ad diaconatum; et modo in diaconatu, concubinas quatuor, vel quinque, vel plures noctu in lecto habentes*).” The reformers of the religious orders could do nothing but halt the evil without destroying it in principle. St. Colomban, who promulgated his rule about this time, had introduced into it this severe clause: "He who shall have had familiar converse with a woman, *tete-a-tete* and without witnesses, shall be put on bread and water for two days or shall receive two hundred blows of the lash.” The most rigorous rule, however, was promptly relaxed in the bosom of a community where the fire of the sensual passions incessantly smouldered. It was always by way of incontinence that scandal in the monastic life began. The councils and the synod, with their wise prescriptions, were unable to impose a bridle on the passions of the monks, passions the more irresistible for being restrained; they knew, as St. Jerome energetically remarks, that the power of the Devil is hidden in the loins (*diaboli virtus in lumbis*); they forced themselves to put woman far from their eyes and thoughts; they understood that the legitimate wives of bishops and priests, accepted by the primitive Church, were but occasions to sin. "Are we to suffer," wrote Veranus, Bishop of Lyons, in one of his *Assemblies* (in 585), "are we to suffer the

servant of the altar, the man given the honor of approaching the Holy of Holies, to be defiled with the unworthy delights of carnal pleasures, or are we to suffer a cleric, alleging the rights of marriage, to fill at once the duties of priest and the role of husband?" The *bishopesses* (*episcopae*) disappeared by degrees and were no longer tolerated; absolute celibacy became the indispensable condition of ecclesiastics, and the entering of a monastery of men was forbidden to women, as well as the entering of a monastery of women to men.

But all this was but a dead letter; the authority of the Church over its ministers did not exceed the law, which it always had the right to make, and which it never had the power to put into execution; the convents, as a natural consequence of human passions, were for the most part receptacles of impurity, and it became necessary, two or three times a century, to introduce into them a partial or complete reform. Such is the history of nearly all the monasteries, where scandal did not break out every time that debauchery took possession of the community. Nothing was known, as a rule, of what took place on the inside of the cloister, except by vague and distant rumors. When the bishop judged it proper to inquire into the evil and to find a remedy for it, the investigation would reveal grave disorders over which Christian modesty demanded that the episcopal mantle be extended. The principal cause of these excesses of the monastic life was the proximity of houses of the other sex and visits paid to them; in one, the abbot or the prior had the direction of the religious; in the other, the abbess exercised a sort of sovereignty over her subjects. This constant proximity of the two sexes in the abbeys brought with it a throng of abuses which episcopal foresight endeavored in vain to prevent, for they were always renewed. The manners of those of the cloister exercised a deplorable influence over the laity, who did not pride themselves as being as virtuous as their confessors; the secular clergy did not give any better example to their parishioners. Martinien, monk of Rabais, in the tenth century, said to the priests of his time: "Is it your law to take a wife or to have relations with women? To pollute, by dif-



ferent sorts of lusts, your bodies made to receive the bread of angels?" This Martinien, in his unpublished treatise, which he maliciously entitled *De Laude Monachorum*, reproached his companions of the cloth "with living like dissolute troopers, in place of arming themselves with the incorruptible sword of chastity and adorning their hands with good works." Père Berthollet, in his great *History of Luxembourg*, is forced to confess, Jesuit as he is, that the clergy in the eleventh century had forgotten the sanctity of their profession, and no longer remembered that continence which had made the glory of the Church. "Living like the peoples, they believed that there was no distinction between them, and they easily persuaded themselves that they ought to have wives." It was these depraved clerics who were called the children of Goliath (*cleri ribaldi, qui vulgo dicuntur de familia Goliae*, in the *Constitutions* of Gautier de Sens, in 923). The wholesome portion of the clergy was desolated at beholding the progress of this moral gangrene, which nothing seemed to stop. Turpio, the pious Bishop of Limoges, who died in 944, left in his will (*Biblioth. Cluniacensis*), this confession, despoiled of any artifice: "We ourselves, who should give the example, we are the instruments of the damnation of others, and in place of being the pastors of the people, we conduct ourselves like devouring wolves!"

This is not the place to reveal the gross vices of the clergy, who believed that everything was permissible to them for the reason that they held in their hands the right of absolving sinners; we shall not attempt to uncover the archives of the convents or to give the long list of those that were reformed, excommunicated or suppressed on account of the monstrous carryings-on of their inmates. It is sufficient to say that perhaps there was not to be found a celebrated abbey in which the cloistral manners had not experienced on various occasions the contagion of impudicity. To cite a few examples among a thousand of this sort, the monks of Moyen-Moutier and of Senones (Sens) in Lorraine led an existence so frightful in the tenth century, that they were expelled by order of the Emperor of Germany, but their successors merely

surpassed them in the science of debauchery. In the manuscript *Chronicle* of Jean de Bayon, which M. Noel possesses in his library at Nancy, we see that the monks of Moyen-Moutier were moved by a heresy of a Greek eunuch named Nicetas, who had established at Constantinople the castration of all novices destined for monastic life. These corrupting monks, who carried on an infamous commerce with the young of the country, whom they attracted by night to their cells, imagined that the heresy of Nicetas would result in depriving them of the source of their pleasures; they therefore charged their abbot Humbert, to go to Constantinople to combat a heresy which they feared for themselves, and the abbot filled his delicate mission to the general satisfaction, for he saved the virility of the monks by wiping out the heresiarch in a dialogue in which he convicted him of desiring to change the servants of God into priests of Cybele. On his return, he found that his abbey had profited by his absence to make one step the more toward perdition; he thought to frighten these perverse ones by threatening them with the pains of hell. "When I was crossing the Alps," he told them, "I met a troop of flamboyant demons, mounted on flaming horses. They were escorting the soul of Gobuim, Bishop of Chillon, who had just been surprised by death, at the very moment he was committing the sin of fornication with a religious. I asked the chief of the demons if it would not be possible to redeem this poor soul by means of prayers; but the malign spirit to whom I spoke replied with a terrible burst of laughter and turned his back on me, while all the devils showed me their behinds with indecent gestures." The monks to whom this recital was addressed imitated the vile pantomime of the demons and thanked their abbot for having triumphed over the heresy of Nicetas by saying: "It is for us to prove now that a good monk does not need to be a good eunuch, and that a good eunuch cannot be a good monk."

We shall not parade our readers from convent to convent in order to initiate them into the culpable disorders which took place in those institutions; it is sufficient to picture the cloisters as dens of Prostitution (*scortationis fornices*, says a monastic writer of

the eleventh century). Gregory VII, who endeavored to bring the Church in France to respectable manners, wrote to all the bishops, in 1074: "With you, all justice is trampled under foot. The most shameful actions, the cruelest, the filthiest and most intolerable, are committed with impunity; and these actions have become habits." The indignation of this papal legislator is understandable when we see Mauger, Archbishop of Rouen, committing crimes which, according to the expression of Guillaume of Poitiers, exhaled about him the odor of shame; when we see an Enguerrand, Bishop of Laon, turning into ridicule temperance and purity "with expressions," says Guibert de Nogent, "worthy of the most licentious juggler;" when we see a Manasses, Archbishop of Rheims, who was, according to one of his contemporaries, "a filthy beast, a monster with not a single virtue to redeem his vices;" or when we see a Hugues, Bishop of Langres, who defiled himself with adulteries and sodomy (*sodomitico etiam flagitio pollutum esse*, we read in the Acts of the Synod of Rheims, where he was brought to judgment). All these unworthy prelates received a striking punishment, but their fatal example was none the less followed by the greater number of clerics, who were astonished at the severity of the credals of Gregory VII: "He is a heretic and a senseless wretch!" cried the members of the diocese of Mayence (in the *Chronicle* of Lambert Schaffn). "Would he oblige men to live like celestial creatures and, contrary to nature, to slacken the bridle on debauchery and fornication? We would rather renounce the priesthood than renounce marriage." Nearly all were married or kept concubines, mistresses, women friends and servants. Yves of Chartres, in his letters (*Epist.* 85) cites a certain prelate who cohabited publicly with two women, and who was preparing to take a third (*qui publice sibi duo scorta copulavit et tertiam pellicem jam sibi prae-paravit*). Despite pontifical decrees, the clergy persisted for a long time in concubinage and refused stubbornly to renounce their pleasures (*se pellicibus ad hoc nolunt abstinere nec pudicitiae in-haerere*, says Orderic Vital). The same historian tells us that the Archbishop of Rouen, having excommunicated those who

dwelt in incontinence, was pursued by these latter with stones. Bastards of the priests and monks multiplied in an infinite number, and their fathers did not blush to dower, marry and enrich them at the expense of the Church. There was not a chapter in which the canons did not "burn with the ardors of lust" (*Gall. Christ.*, Volume I, Append., page 6); there was not a diocese which could count ten priests who were sober, chaste, peaceful and charitable, exempt from all crime, all infamy and all defilement (*Fulb. Carnot. Epist.* 17); there was not a convent in which the rule of the order was scrupulously observed or where the fathers who wore the monastic habit were truly monks. "*O miseri,*" said the monk Martinien, "*nos monachiali habitu induti, videmur monachi et non sumus!*"

The depraved conduct of the priests and monks was but all too well imitated by the laity, who indulged in contemptible raileries, but the clergy did not seek even to preserve the appearance of decency, and they cheapened their own vices with jugglers who made light of them in their satiric songs, with painters who composed pictures and miniatures, with image makers or sculptors who adorned their works in stone, in wood or ivory. This was a favorite theme of literature and of art. The intemperance of the monastic tribe, their sensuality, their effrontery, served as a permanent subject for the fantasies of artists and the epigrams of poets. The men of the Church appeared to be by no means offended, irritated or scandalized by written or plastic portraits of their turpitudes. They amused themselves at their own expense by causing the joyous epic of clerical life to be reproduced in the paintings of their missals, in the sculptures of their churches, in the images of their diptychs and in the ornaments of their furniture. The caustic verve of the carvers of images was exercised without peace or truce on the disorders of the clerics; hence so many gross allegories, the many indecent caricatures, the many filthy drolleries hidden in the capitals, the friezes and the arabesques of religious architecture. Now we have monks changed into pigs; now pigs dressed as monks; sometimes the ancient phallus protrudes from the frock of a religious; some-



times it is nuns in debauchery with devils; sometimes it is apes pursuing naked women and biting their buttocks. The ordinary emblem of the vice of impurity was a toad or the head of a chimera covering the sexual part of the man or woman. In all these obscene groups, the robe and hood of the monk expressed the malign intention of the author, who amuses himself by immortalizing the vice and shame of his patrons. These latter were the first to laugh at his work, since they left standing those scandalous reliefs, the majority of which were destroyed in modern times through the prudery of the ecclesiastics, who declined to spare the monuments on account of their similarity. That is why the strangest of these capitals, those decorated with all species of the crime of bestiality, are no longer known to us except by the statement of archaeologists and savants who have preserved the tradition. Thus, there is not, so far as we know, even a drawing of a sculpture indecent enough which was to be seen at Saint-Germain-des-Prés and which represented a religious prostituting herself at once with a monk and an animal which resembled a wolf. There was also at Saint-Georges-de-Boche a shaft of a column which was crowned with a frightful *melée* of men and apes vying with one another in incontinence and in audacity.

The laymen, in the presence of these models of clerical lust, did not pretend to remain pure and virtuous; they prided themselves, on the contrary, only on a sort of libidinous emulation which led them to rival the debauchery of the priests and monks. The historians of the age picture them to us as scorpions and serpents with human faces. (*Hist. des Comtes de Poitou*, by J. Besly, page 264). It is easy to understand how this general depravation led to a belief in the end of the world and in the reign of the Anti-Christ. This superstitious belief, which was prevalent in the year 1000, did not serve to render society less corrupt. Everyone, despite the terrors inspired by the approach of the last judgment, was stubborn in pursuing his joyous manner of life and in enjoying the delights of the flesh (*carnales illecebrae*). The world went from bad to worse, and there was a general expectation of a new deluge (*videbatur sane mundus declinare ad ves-*

*peram*, says Guillaume of Tyre, in Book I of his *History*). The poets were in agreement with the preachers in asserting that the human species had made a frightful progress in crime, and that moral decadence was becoming more pronounced every day. A troubadour of the tenth century, cited by Raynouard (*Poesies orig. des Troub.*, Volume II, page 16), says, in a poem in the Romance language:

*Enfans en dies foren ome fello,  
Mal ome foren, aora sunt peior.*

All the writers of the time are in agreement as to the profound degradation of the social state, and all of them attribute the principal cause to the sin of incontinence, which had assumed gigantic proportions. Some, in giving their goods to the churches and the monasteries, in the expectation of the Anti-Christ, based their gifts upon the credulous meanness of mankind: *iniquitas quotidiana malitiae incrementa sumit*, one reads in connection with a donation made to the church of Saint Jean d'Angely. The donors felt so laden with defilement that they even ruined themselves in order to purchase absolution, which they often received from the hands of a cleric more defiled than themselves. "One then saw," says Raoul Glaber, in his *Chronicle* (Book IV, Chapter 9), "everywhere, in the churches as in the world, a contempt of justice and of laws. Everyone gave himself to the transports of passion. . . . The word of the Apostle might justly have been applied to our nation: 'There are among you so many impurities that one does not hear it said that the like are committed among the pagans.' " Orderic Vital, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Book VIII, year 1090), charges the contemporary generation with delighting with what was most shameful and infected in the opinion of honorable persons of past time. It is true to say that, the end of the world and the Anti-Christ having made a rendezvous for the year 1000, those who survived that fatal epoch believed themselves authorized to fear nothing more in the way

of Celestial vengeance, and so hurled themselves more than ever into the pigpen of their unclean pleasures.

We find here and there a few precise details relative to the nature of these pleasures, details ordinarily disguised under vague generalities, pertaining to pleasures not different from the other works of the Devil if we are to believe the lamentations they inspired in the few honest folk of those perverse centuries. "Now," cries an anonymous poet in a complaint written in leonine verse upon the evil of the times (*Histor. des Gaules*, Volume XI, page 445), "now we have men who lead a scandalous life, debauchees, sodomites and robbers, those who injure and despise honest folk, of well regulated manners." Debauchery and sodomy (*moechi, sodomitae*) are, then, the vices which are the most widespread among all classes of the population, in the homes of counts and barons, as in the humble *borde* of the serf, in the shadow of the cloisters as in the chambers of the abbot or the archbishop. The Deacon Pierre, at the council of Rheims in 1049, pronounced, in the name of Pope Leo IX, a discourse in which priests and laity received a lively reprimand for their abominable habits. These habits were so inveterate in France that Henri, Abbot of Clairvaux, wrote to Pope Alexander III in 1177: "Ancient Sodom is springing up from her ashes!" (See the *Hist. de Paris*, by Du-laure, edition of 1837, Volume II, page 40.) Orderic Vital, in a number of places in his *History*, draws attention to the contagion of this odious vice, which owed its recrudescence to the establishment of the Norman races in the Gallo-Frankish provinces. "Then," he says, in Book VIII, "the effeminate were dominant in all the land, and gave themselves without a bridle to their filthy debaucheries; the *chattemites* deserving of the flames, impudently abused the horrible inventions of Sodom (*tunc effeminati passim in orbe dominabantur, indisciplinate debacchabantur, sodomiticisque spurcitiis foedi catamitae, flammis urendi, turpiter abutebantur*)." The same historian has this invasion of sodomy prophesied by a famous anchorite whom Queen Matilda, wife of William of England, sent to consult in Germany. The anchorite predicted the evils which threatened Normandy under

the reign of Robert, son of William, and grandson of Robert the Devil. "This Prince," he says, "like a lascivious cow, shall abandon himself to pleasures and idleness, shall seize the ecclesiastical goods and shall distribute them among his lenons and his infamous flatterers (*spurcisque lenonibus aliisque lecatoribus distribuet*) . . . . In the Duchy of Robert, the catamites and the effeminates (*catamitae et effeminati*) shall rule, and under their domination perversity and misery shall merely increase." It is, then, undeniable that the vice of sodomy which had been revived by the Crusades, had been introduced into France by the Normans, who left it as a mark of their passage in all the places where they sojourned either to take up winter quarters, or to await the return of their devastating hordes.

Abbom, in his poem on the *Siege of Paris* by the Normans, imputes to the French lords the ignominious vice which we have preferred to attribute exclusively to their enemies. These men of the north, like the majority of the Barbarians, had no shame in giving themselves mutually to an abominable Prostitution; they made but a very moderate use of their women, who were constantly pregnant or nursing, and who had no other purpose than that of parentage; for the tribe, whose strength depended upon the number of its children, demanded an exuberant production, which would not have favored the habit of voluptuous relations between husband and wife. Such were, certainly, the origin and the reason of these degrading errors on the part of the masculine sex. The Normans were not less ardent with regard to women, and they did not spare them any more than the men, in the villages which they occupied suddenly and by force. They respected only the old, that is to say, those whom they slew without pity; but as to the young, they had a great need of those, and shared them among themselves, taking their victims with them, after they had employed them for their pleasure, from under the eyes of their husbands, who would not have dared to be offended or to offer any opposition. The monk Richer, recounting an expedition of the Normans, who devastated Brittany in the ninth century, shows them taking away men, women and children:



“They decapitated the old of both sexes,” he says, “putting the children into servitude and violating those women who appeared to them beautiful (*feminas vero, quae formosae videbantur, prostituunt*).” One may thus form an idea of the terror which attached to the name of Norman and which preceded their approach; they depopulated entire provinces; villages which were flourishing before their appearance were left without inhabitants when they departed; banks of rivers which they had ascended in their flat-bottomed boats were changed into deserts; but they had sowed upon their route an impure lesson in manners, and the vanquished kept the hideous mark of slavery which their conquerors had branded upon them. The Normans, in settling upon the soil of England, did not treat the indigenous population of that country with any more regard than they had shown in the land conquered by Rollo; they no longer massacred the old, but they abused the young and outraged the girls, the noblest of whom served as playthings to the soldiers in the uncleanest fashion imaginable (*nobiles puellae despicabilium ludibrio armigerorum patebant et ab immundis nebulonibus oppressae dedecus suum deplorabant*, says Orderic Vital). One may presume that Norman manners had not greatly improved in the course of two centuries, and that the senseless libertines always knew how to get along without their wives, for the latter, during the long absence of their husbands, felt themselves inflamed with concupiscence (*saeva libidinis face urebantur*, says the Latin, which is still more energetic than the French), and they would send to the absent more than one message (in the year 1068) to announce the fact that they were of a mind to take other husbands if their own delayed returning. The fear of seeing bastards emerge from their conjugal beds would sometimes decide the Normans to return to their impatient wives (*lascivis dominibus suis*); but the greater number remained in England, where they found sufficient to distract and console. If their wives did not all remarry, they did not fail to give bastards to their husbands. A poet of this epoch (see *Hist. Norm. script.*, page 683) groaned at seeing that “the lamp of virtue had been extinguished in Normandy.”

The other provinces which composed feudal France were not at that time in a more satisfying situation from the point of view of manners. The lords made a show of all their vices and preserved no remnant of modesty. M. Émile de la Bedolliere, in his learned *Histoire des Mœurs et de la Vie Privée des Francs* gives us two episodes remarkable for the savage debauchery they display, a debauchery which characterized both sexes, among the nobles as among the serfs. In 990, the rumor spread that William IV, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitiers had had adulterous relations with the wife of the Viscount of Thouars, in whose home he had received hospitality. Emma, wife of William, took occasion to revenge herself on her rival. One day she perceived the latter riding horseback with few attendants in the neighborhood of the château de Talmont. Emma came running up with a large troop of squires and valets; she hurled the Viscountess to the earth, loaded her with injuries, and left her to be looked after by her followers. The latter seized the unfortunate lady and violated her in turn for one whole night, in obedience to the orders of Emma, who incited them and looked on (*comitantes se quatenus libidinose nocte quae imminebat, tota ea abuterentur, incitabat*). The following day, they cast her out, half naked and dying of hunger and fatigue. The Viscount of Thouars could neither complain nor revenge himself; he took back his dishonored wife, while William exiled his own in the château de Chinon. We see, in the year 1086, a rape less horrible in its circumstances, but likewise accomplished in the presence of witnesses. Ebles, heir of the Comte de Comborn in Aquitaine, having attained his majority, proceeded to claim the chateau and the lands which his uncle and guardian, Bernard, was holding from him. The latter refused to give them up. Ebles assembled his warriors and came to lay siege to the château, which Bernard in vain endeavored to defend. Ebles entered the place which his uncle had been forced to abandon, and there met his aunt named Garcilla, and at once, without disarming himself, in the face of all his companions, who looked on and applauded, he assuaged with her his revolting lubricity (*pherui uxorem coram multis foedavit*). (See the *Hist.*

*des Mœurs et de la Vie Privée des Français*, Volume II, page 343, and Volume III, page 83, after two chronicles published in the *Bibliotheca Nova Manuscriptorum* of Labée.)

One is no longer astonished at these monstrous facts, and one comes to suspect still more frightful ones, if possible, when one thinks with disgust of the ancient *Penitentials*; it is with them that we must seek the occult phases of Prostitution in the Middle Ages; it is with them that the sin of the flesh was sinned with the greatest audacity, a sin which did not limit itself to illicit unions between the two sexes, but which found its pleasure in the most execrably depraved caprices. Surely, as M. de la Bedolliere says, "one would prefer to believe for the honor of humanity that the horrors of the *Penitentials* were purely accidental" and that but rarely an echo of them was to be heard in the tribunal of penitence; but they reappear on every page in the writings of these *Penitentials*, which classify them according to the different degrees of culpability and of penalty. It is, then, certain that they were frequent and that they spread a latent corruption in all parts of the body social. We cannot refrain from recording these horrors of Prostitution, but we shall not relieve them of their Latin veil, and we shall not even borrow a translation, prudently excised, from those modern *Penitentials* which display a respect for the doctrine of the Church. We must distinguish in this primitive code of the confessional those facts which concern the most secret acts of marriage, those which have a bearing on incest, those which relate to debauches against nature, and, finally, those which refer to the crime of bestiality.

All that the Church had done to protect the purity of marriage was but evidence of all that was being done in the sanctuary of husband and wife against the moral object of this institution. It was but a venial sin if the married pair failed to consecrate the first wedding night to practices of devotion (*eadem nocte pro reverentia ipsius benedictionis in virginitate permaneant*, says Regimon, Book II); if the husband who had slept with his wife had failed to wash himself before entering the Church (*meritus qui cum uxore sua dormierit, lavet se antequam intret in ecclesia*).

*Penitentiel de Fleury*); if the woman had entered the church during her menstrual period (*mulieres menstruo tempore non intrent ecclesiam*); if the conjugal couch, during the same period, had been approached by the wedded pair (*in tempore menstrui sanguinis qui tunc nupserit; 30 dies poeniteat. Penitentiel d'Angers*); if they had failed to preserve an absolute continence, on Sundays, fete days, for three days before communion and during the four weeks which preceded Easter and Christmas. But the sin became more grave and the penitence longer when the married pair had given free rein to their obscene fancies, which were not absolved in the privileges of marriage (*si quis cum uxore sua retro nupserit, 40 dies poeniteat; si in tergo, tres annos, quia sodomiticum scelus est. Penitentiel d'Angers*). Carnal copulations in marriage were not to be other than a chaste and holy work, destined for the procreation of children, and not for the satisfaction of the senses. Such were the expressions of Jonas, Bishop of Orleans, in his Institute for Laymen: *Oportet ut legitima carnis copula causa sit prolis non voluptatis, et carnis commixtio procreandorum liberorum sit gratia, non satisfactio vitiorum.*

Incest became multiplied under the most hideous forms; the son showed no respect to his mother; the mother herself did not respect the innocence of her own child; the brother did not respect the sister; the father polluted the daughter! But there were for these abominations penitences of ten and fifteen years, during which the guilty one had to observe fasts and continence. (*Qui cum matra fornicaverit, 15 annis; si cum filia et sorore, 12—Si adolescens sororem, 5 annos, et si matrem, 7, et quamdiu vixerit, numquam sine poenitentia, vel continentia.—Si mater cum filio parvulo fornicationem imitatur, si mater cum filio suo fornicaverit, tribus annis poeniteat. Penitentiels de Fleury et d'Angers.*)

Infanticides and abortions were not less numerous among the pagans, who always tolerated and sometimes approved them. Sometimes they smothered the infant at birth, sometimes they strangled it, sometimes they poisoned it or bled it to death. There



were men and women who sold drugs for purposes of abortion (*herbarii biri, mulieres interfectores infantum*). Other drugs rendered women sterile and men impotent. To exalt the love, or rather the sensual ardor of a man or woman frightful potions were compounded (*Interrogasti de illâ feminâ quae menstruum sanguinem suum miscuit cibo vel potui et dedit viro suo ut comederet? et quae semen viri sui in potu bibit? Tali sententiâ ferienda sunt sicut magi. Penitentiel de Raban Maur.—Illa quae semen viri sui in cibo miscet, ut inde plus ejus amorem accipiat, annos tres poeniteat. Penitentiel de Fleury*).

There were innumerable varieties among the sins against nature in the eyes of the confessor, who also applied to them many varied penances. Simple sodomy (*si quis fornicaverit sicut sodomitae*, says the Roman *Penitential*) carried with it four years of penitence; but the age of the sinners made a great deal of difference. The child, the adolescent and the grown man did not all receive the same punishment, though they had sinned in the same fashion. The defilements of extreme youth resembled frequently those of the most depraved old age; but they were effaced more easily and were corrected with the years (*Pueri sese invicem manibus inquinantes, dies 40 poeniteat. Si vero pueri sese inter femora sordidant, dies centum; majores vero, tribus quadragesimis. Penitentiel d'Angers*). Unnatural errors among women were punished as severely as those of men, as though chastity were even more necessary in a sex possessed of an irresistible charm for attracting the other sex. The women, even the religious, indulged in orgies among themselves, in the course of which the Roman fascinum reappeared, while the art of the fellator had forgotten nothing of the immodest lessons it had learned in antiquity (*Mulier cum altera fornicans, tres annos. Sanctimonialis femina cum sanctimoniali per machinatum polluta, annos septem. Penitential d'Angers.—Mulier qualicumque molimine aut per ipsam aut cum altera fornicans. Penitentiel de Fleury.—Si quis semen in os miserit, septem annos poeniteat. Ibid.*). Sometimes incest was mingled with crime against nature and aggravated at once the infamy of the chastisement; sod-

omy between brothers could only be redeemed by fifteen years' abstinence (*qui cum fratre naturali fornicaverit per commixtionem carnis, ab omni carne se absteineat quindecim annis. Penitential de Fleury*). All manner of bestiality, we must believe, figured in the *Penitentials* and called merely for a temporal penance, although the civil law condemned the criminal to perish with the beast that was his accomplice. All the beasts appeared to be subject to this detestable misalliance (*cum jumento, cum quadrupede, cum animalibus*, says the Roman *Penitential*; *cum jumento, cum pecude*, says the *Penitential d'Angers*; *cum pecoribus*, says the *Recueil de Regionon*). Nothing was more common in the Middle Ages than this crime, which was punishable by death when it was patent, and when it had been confirmed by the sentence of a tribunal. The *Records of Parliament* are full of unfortunate ones burned with a dog, with a nanny-goat, with a cow, with a pig, or with a goose! But we only find in the letter of Radam Maur to Regimbold, Archbishop of Mayence, a canonical discussion of these enormities, which in those days astonished no one (*Tertia quaestio de eo fuit, qui cani feminae inrationabiliter se miscuit, et quarta de illo, qui cum vaccis saepius fornicatus est? Qui cum jumento vel pecore coierit, morte moriatur. Mulier quae succubuerit cuilibet jumento, simul interficiatur cum eo. Capitul. de Baluze, t. H, append., col. 1378*). In the *Capitularies* of Ansegise, the bishops and the priests are especially urged to combat this depravity, which is looked upon as the remainder of paganism, perpetuated longer in the country than in the city; but all the legislators recognized the fact that such a crime, which puts man on a level with the beasts, is deserving of death. They would willingly have pardoned the beast rather than the man, but they killed the former and hurled its flesh into the sewer from fear that, through the cunning of the Devil, it would engender a monstrous concourse of men and beasts.

Finally, to give a still more complete idea of the obstinacy of the debauchees and their detestable habits, we shall recall here a criminal case which has to do with a debauch against nature of the sort known as *fornicatio inter femora*. It is Ducange who

furnishes us with this singular document, taken from a charter of Edward I, King of England. This charter probably dates from the first years of the tenth century. A man named Simon kept a concubine named Matilda, with whom he had never had complete relations. One day, he was flagrantly surprised by his friends in the act of having illicit relations with this concubine, who took vengeance by insisting that he marry her. She declared before the judges that she had lived with him for long as his wife, but that he had never married her (*Juratores dicunt quod prædictus Simon semper teunit dictam Matildam ut uxorem suam, et dicunt quod numquam dictam Matildam desponsavit*). Then Simon had to choose between three sorts of punishment or reparation: to give his faith to Matilda, to lose his life or to render to Matilda the duties which a husband owes his wife (*vel ipsam Matildam retro osculare*). Simon made his choice at once: he gave his faith to Matilda, but he did not care to marry her in any other manner than he had previously done (*inter femora*). Ducange has extracted this curious anecdote from the *Dictionary of the Laws of England* (*Nomolex Anglicana*) by Thomas Blount.

At the time of Edward I and Charles the Simple, his son-in-law, the manners of France and England presented a sad analogy; and some poet of the Saxon court of Edward might have said of England what the poet Abbom was then saying of France, in his famous poem on the *Siege of Paris*: "O France, why do you hide yourself? Where is your ancient strength, which once assured your triumph over the most powerful enemies? You are expiating three vices in chief: pride, the shameful delights of Venus and lustful habits. You do not even put out of your bed married women or nuns consecrated to the Lord. What is more, you are satiated with your wives, and so you commit outrages against nature!" Two centuries later, Pierre, Abbot of Celles, in his letters (Book IV, Ep. 10), addressed to the city of Paris the same reproaches which Abbom had addressed to France, and he accused the city of perverting the manners of her inhabitants:

“O Paris, you are a seducer and a corrupter! How many snares do your own vices spread for imprudent youth! How many crimes do you cause to be committed!” Prostitution was, in all ages, the provocative counsellor to other vices, which could not exist without her and which fastened themselves on her flanks like young wolves hanging on the dugs of their voracious mother.





## CHAPTER VI.

**I**F THE depravation of manners at this period of the Middle Ages had exceeded anything which the most barbaric epochs had permitted in the way of debauchery and crime, legal Prostitution, carried on as an industry and as a safeguard to decent women by offering the sensual appetites a satisfaction that was easy and always at hand, this Prostitution, regular and organized, no longer existed, at least under the eye and hand of the feudal police. It was admitted neither in principle nor in law. It could be practiced only fraudulently and in secret, at the peril of the women whom misery or libertinism encouraged to take up this vile trade; it by no means found any support or protection from the magistrates of the cities which had been converted into communes nor from seigniorial justices. It was adjudged neither necessary nor useful and was looked upon as a public outrage to the decency of all. However, it was quite necessary to tolerate it and to wink at it as a brutal fact, reproduced incessantly and everywhere, hiding, or rather disguising itself, despite the severest prohibitions, despite the most rigorous penalties, we are convinced that this legal Prostitution was forced to conquer its shameful place in society, by its perseverance in braving the laws and their punishments, by its cleverness in assuming all masks, by its strength and its tenacity, by its vivacious and encroaching character. One might compare the situation of women of an evil life, in the midst of a society hostile to them, and which could not do without them, though it persecuted them continually, without ever succeeding in becoming rid of them,—one might compare this abnormal situation to that of the Jews, who also had against them the civil and ecclesiastical legislation, and who every day were imprisoned, despoiled of their goods, and expelled, and who yet came back continually to their banks, to their usuries,

and their enormous gains. Prostitution does not have an avowed and recognized, if not authorized, existence in the state, until the reign of Louis VIII, or perhaps that of Phillip-Augustus, for the king of the ribaldries (*rex ribaldorum*), who was, evidently, the supreme governor of the agents of Prostitution, was created by Phillip-Augustus, as we shall see later.

It is quite difficult to determine the habits and character of this mercenary Prostitution in an age of general corruption, which yet did not permit the free practice of this contemptible industry. The abbot, the bishop, the baron and the feudal lord might have in their house a species of seraglio or lupanar, supported at the expense of their vassals; according to the expression of a writer of the eleventh century, each possessor of a fief kept in his gynæceum as many *ribaudes* as he did dogs in his kennel; but the public lupanar, open to every comer, under the direction of a male or female exploitant of this impure commerce, did not exist in a small number of localities, where the seigniorial and municipal administrations had relaxed their ancient customs and feigned blindness in order to appear tolerant. It was, then, at Paris and in a few large cities that the establishment of bad houses in the suburbs and in a few designated quarters, met with few obstacles, until the day when the scandal of the thing restored the vigor of the law and led to the more or less radical suppression of these centers of debauchery. There were also prostitutes who were not subject to the exploitation of the proprietor of a lupanar, and who kept all the profits they gained by the sale of their bodies; these mingled ordinarily with the respectable population, and although living by their impure traffic, they were careful not to let anything come out, under pain of falling at once into disgrace with their neighbors, and of being obliged to execute justice upon themselves by discreetly disappearing. It is to be understood, then, that the interior life of these bad houses and the private life of public women, found many echoes in the written monuments of these obscure epochs. Prostitution from the eighth to the twelfth centuries does not possess many characteristics which distinguish it in a salient manner, although it differs absolutely

from the Prostitution of the Low-Empire. We must be content for our picture with a few isolated facts, which are not related and which testify to the diversity of local customs. Moreover, these facts, furnished us by the charters of communes and the ordinances of the urban police, are too rare to enable us to form one vast ensemble. Thus, it is only after such a collection of scattered and separate facts that it is possible to determine the secret manners of Prostitution in feudal France.

But the popular language of the eleventh century, the low-Latin, which was to create the French language, by mingling with the dialects of the North and the Midlands, this language, applying new words to new things and new ideas, presents us, in the very formation of these words, with a mass of precious information, in which we shall find many notions relative to our subject. From the end of the ninth century, the vocabulary of Prostitution had undergone a complete change; it is now singularly restrained but composed of locutions wholly new, which appear to have sprung from the mouths of the people rather than from the pens of writers; these locutions, bearing the imprint of the Gallo-Frankish mind and sometimes coined in the German idiom, are made to express what we shall call the *material* of Prostitution. It is clear that these Latin words had no sense except in connection with the particular circumstances which existed at the moment they were created; the people, in their everyday language, were unwilling to accept those words which were always employed in the literary language, but which no longer represented anything in life; the people, with their own genius, then proceeded to create the expressions which were lacking and to give them their own special seal. Thus we see appearing in the vulgar Latin a majority of those words which are to receive later a Gallic transformation, and which have been preserved in the language of the people, for Prostitution could not aspire to have its own gross and impudent formulas and idioms accepted by the noble language. Let us remark, once for all, that the serious writers, the poets and the historians, continued to make use of those general terms which the classic Latin offered them, to



designate the acts and individuals of Prostitution; but those documents coming from an unlettered hand or destined for popular consumption no longer employed any but precise and technical terms which were familiar to all and which did not demand, in order to be understood, the least notion of classical antiquity. Undoubtedly, this language of Prostitution is sordid and worthy of the things which it expresses and the persons whom it describes, but we must not forget that in the Middle Ages all the words of everyday speech were equally esteemed and were made use of, without any reserve, in writings as in oral discourse. Certain expressions pertaining to infamous objects had not yet been branded with infamy, and no importance was attached to modesty of language, spoken or written. That is why our old French is so rich in ingenious or peccant words, which form the vocabulary of Prostitution and which have been, since the century of Louis XIV, banished from the language of honorable folk, as one would formerly have said.

Prostitution, which the lettered always called *meretricium*, of which the innovators had made *meretricatio* and *meretricatus*, was called, among the people and in the vulgar language, *putagium*, and, by extension, *puteum* and *putaria*. This last word appears to have had an origin wholly modern, and despite the authority of the learned Scaliger, in one of his notes on the *Catalecta* of Virgil, we do not believe that *putagium* is to be derived from the Latin *putus*, which occurs in the low-Latin authors with a sense of *small*. Among the ancients, it is true, *putus* had been especially employed as a sign of affection, as a flattering epithet addressed to a young child. The master called his mignon by no other name, and if it happened to be a girl in place of a boy, one said *puta*. The diminutives, *putillus* and *putilla*, were naturally formed, and Plautus, in his *Asinaria* (Act III, Scene 3), puts *putillus*, *my little one*, upon the same footing with *my dove*, *my cat*, *my swallow*, *my sparrow*, in the language of the amorous. One employed by preference, however, as Horace does (*Sat.*, 1, II, 3), *pusus* and *pusa*, which also had their diminutives, *pusillus* and *pusilla*. Nevertheless, we would derive *putagium* from

*puteus*, a well, for the reason that this etymology is equally justified in a literal or a figurative sense. If, on the one hand, public Prostitution may be compared to a banal well, where each is free to go to draw water, on the other hand, in every city, in every quarter, the communal or seigniorial well was the rendezvous of all the women who were in search of adventure. There was always a well in the places frequented by the prostitutes, in the *Court of Miracles*, where they dwelt, in the street where they held their fair. It will be remembered, perhaps, that Jesus Christ had met the Magdalen at a well.\* These wells, the use of which belonged to all the inhabitants of the place, offered their curbs each evening as a meeting place for a numerous areopagus of women, who spoke among themselves of their amours, and who came there under pretext of laying in a supply of water. It was well understood what was meant by going to the well; lovers came there from all sides to keep their trysts. The well was a witness of many sighs and many tears. Pignaol, in speaking of the Well of Love, which had given its name to a street in Paris, situated near the rue de la Truanderie, where Prostitution had its principal seat, says that this famous well owed its name "to a reason which it shares in common with all the wells in the cities or habitable places, in that it serves as a rendezvous for valets and servants, who, under pretext of coming there to draw water, come there to make love." This well, which was not filled in till near the end of the seventeenth century, had been the witness of more than one amorous drama, and tradition recalled in divers fashions the history of a noble damoiselle of the Hellebic family who had been drowned in it under the reign of Phillip-Augustus. A number of lovers also were cited, who had thrown themselves into it, out of spite or jealousy, without finding death. Other lovers, out of gratitude, had desired to give the Well of Love a share in their happiness: one renewed its bucket, another the cord; this one built an iron balustrade; this one put in a new curb, on which

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note): This is to be questioned. The woman at the well was a woman of Samaria. See *John* IV, 1-30. For the woman taken in adultery, see *John*, VII, 1, 2. Whereas in *Luke*, VIII, 1, 2, the Magdalen appears as the woman out of whom seven devils were cast.

one might read in Gothic letters: *Amour m'a refait en 525 tout à fait* (Love rebuilt me in 525).

One might make a curious abstract of all the wells which have played a role in the history of Prostitution, and we would find one in almost every city, by way of demonstrating the fact that the *putagium* in the Middle Ages was almost inseparable from the wells, the majority of which have disappeared today. One would find little difficulty in proving that wells of this sort have existed in Paris, in the streets or near the streets, where dwelt the women of evil life. Let us content ourselves with recalling the fact that the *ribaudes de Soissons*, who enjoyed a proverbial celebrity in the twelfth century (*Dictons populaires*, published by Crapelet, page 64), held their assizes around the well which has survived their *ribaldry*. "The *Court of Love*, or the *Celestial Court*, of Soissons (as MM. P. LaCroix\* and Henri Martin call it in their *Hist. de Soissons*) is situated at the entrance of the rue du Pont; it is a narrow court, surrounded with low buildings, to which one mounts by exterior stone stairs. This court, which is entered by an obscure alley, formerly descended to the river bank; in the middle is a well of singular construction, with, on the margin, a round and narrow orifice surmounted by a conical arch." We shall seek no other arguments to demonstrate the fact that *putagium*, *puteum*, and *putaria* implied the action of going by night to the Well of Love. *Putaria* was a preferred term in the midland provinces. We read in the statutes of the city of Asti (*Collat.* 12, Chapter 7): *Si uxor alicujus civis Astensis olim aufugit pro putaria cum aliquo . . . Puteum* was more in use in the poetic language, which, taking cause for effect, made of *puteum* a synonym of *putagium*. As to this latter word, which must antedate the other, it was consecrated by being introduced into legal language. We find it frequently employed by the jurisconsults, and it figures in more than one ordinance of our kings of the third race; it is sufficient to mention one of these ordinances, in which it is said that the *putagium* of a mother does

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\*Our own author.

not take away from a son the rights of inheritance, provided always that the son is born in the state of legitimate marriage (*quod generaliter dici solet, quod putagium haereditatem non adimit, intelligitur de putagio matris*). The word *putagium* was only applied to the prostitution of a woman. The French language had no sooner stammered out certain words than it proceeded to translate *putagium* into *putage*, *puta* into *pute* and *putena* into *putain*.\* These last two words are contemporary, since the *Chronicle* of Orderic Vital makes mention, in Book XII, of the foundation of a city which was called *Mataputena* (*id est devincens meretricem*), in derision of the Countess Hedwige.

*Putage* occurs incessantly, with the sense of *putagium* in the old French language, especially in the romances and the fabliaux of the Trouveres. The citations, selected by Ducange, give the exact value of this expression, which has not even remained in trivial language, and which could not have been replaced by the words *putinage* and *putasserie*, which the vocabulary of the low peoples has preserved, without taking account of the nuances in their relative meanings. The two following verses from the romance of *Vacces* establishes a true acceptance of *putage*:

*Maint homme a essillié et torné à servage,  
Et mis par povreté mainte femme au putage.*

The romance of *Renard* lends to *putage* a sense which approaches that of *putanisme* in the modern language:

*Grant deshonnour et grant hontage  
Fistes-vous et grant putage.*

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note): Our author appears to have overlooked the Latin *putidus*, stinking, disgusting, from *putere*, to stink, allied to Sanskrit *pūj*, to stink, and Danish *pute*, to put into, and Welsh *putiaw*, to put or thrust into, whence our verb, to put. Lacroix appears to insist on a derivation from *putus*, a boy, with a sense of small, or from *puteus*, a well. In the latter case, we are not lacking in metaphors comparing a whore to a well, in the sense of a pit, something bottomless. See the *Contes Drolatiques*. But if the derivation is from *puteus*, a well, there may here be the sense of a *pit*, into which something might be dropped or thrown and so lost. "A strange woman is a deep pit." (*Proverbs*.)



The romance of *Amile et Amy* makes use of the same word to express the same thing:

*A mal putaige doit li siens cors liverez!*

Finally, the romance of *Athis* in making use of this word, so designates the state or condition of a woman who prostitutes herself:

*Et sa femme estoit mariée,  
Benoite ne espousée  
Qui puis la traitroit à putage,  
A mauvaistié ne à hontage  
Qu'on le fesist mourir à honte,  
Sans en faire nul autre conte.*

We shall not multiply citations for the word *pute*, which has kept its original use and sense in the low language. This word always had an insulting sense, as we see in these verses of the romance of *Garin le Loherain*.

*Or, m'avez-vous lesdengiée vilment,  
Et clamé pute, oyant toute la gent.*

We shall tell later how this insult addressed to all women in general cost the poet Jean de Meung dearly.

The *lenocinium*, that faithful and inseparable companion of the *meretricium*, found more difficulty in changing its name; since it was ordinarily practiced by women, the name was at first transformed into *lenonia*, which in the language of the twelfth century was Gallicised and became *lenonine*, but the people who reigned sovereignly in the low lands of language, soon invented another word, which they drew from the habits of the courtiers of Prostitution. This word was *maquerellagium*, of which the old French name *maquerellage*, which still exists in the language of the servant hall and which yet has a place in the dictionary of the Academy. Before *maquerellagium*, the words *maquerellus* and

*maquerella*, *maquereau* and *maquerelle* had been created. The most learned etymologists are rejoiced to discover the origin of these words, which have no Latin in them except their termination. Nicot and Lenage, in searching for analogies between the fish called *maquereau* and the manor woman who speculates in the Prostitution of another, have supposed that *maquereau* had been formed from *maculae* for the reason that the fish is variegated with black and blue transverse stripes, and for the reason that among the ancients the theatrical costume of the lenon, male or female, was also variegated with different colors. Tripaut, remembering that *aquariolus* or the Roman water-bearer, possessed at Rome the privilege of the *lenocinium* has thought that the simple addition of an initial letter, due to the guttural pronoun pronunciation of the Franks, had produced *marquariolus*, which corresponds nearly enough with *maquerellus*. Others, with more naïveté, have hunted up the Hebrew verb *machar*, which signifies *sell*, and which is not inappropriate to the trade of one who sells human flesh. These last etymologists ought to cite in behalf of their deduction certain documents of the Middle Ages in which the vending of horses and women is attributed to the Jews.

We are astonished that scholars should preoccupy themselves with the etymology of the word as applied to man, before having found that of the one which is applied to fish: for it is altogether natural that the fish should have first been named *maquerellus* and that the man, by some similitude, should have been described by the name of this fish. What is the first etymology which presents itself to us, without any effort of the imagination, or any knowledge of linguistics? The fish called *maquereau* was once more abundant along the shores of the Ocean than it is today; this scomber followed in the wake of herring banks and shared their fate after having lived at their expense. Its Danish or Norman

name, which is kept in the Dutch language,\* takes us back to the period when it was Latinized: *mackereel* is certainly older than *maquerellus* and *makarellus*. Scholars, dissatisfied with the barbaric consonants of this word, had corrupted it to render it less savage to the ear; there is no other explanation for the formation of *magarellus*, which appears in many charters of the kings of England. On the coasts of the North, one said *makevus*, or rather *makerus*, if it is permissible for us to suppose an error in Ducange. As to borrowing the name of the fish for the species of man who imitated its manners, this was at first a play of words, an epigram, which entered profoundly into the spirit of the popular language, and which lost by degrees its figurative sense. The people ended by forgetting what point of resemblance had caused them to confound the man with the fish. It is, however, easy to understand that the lenon, hovering about women in order to draw a profit from them and pushing them in a manner into the net of the corrupter, plays a role analogous to that of the *maquereau*, which escorts the herrings and fattens itself on them. However this may be, this figurative expression designating procurers of one and the other sex had been universally admitted and did not even appear out of place in the ordinances of the kings of France. It has received since then its indecent stigma, but it is inveterate in the energetic language of the populace. It is, however, but the name of a fish to be seen upon all tables and which formerly cost four deniers the thousand to the archbishop or count in whose suzerainty it arrived. If this fish had not received its name from the peoples of the North, we should not be far averse to accepting an etymology more ingenious than plausible, which would forge from the verb *moechari* the substantive *moecharellus*, to describe the instigator of debauchery (*moechi concilator*).

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\* (J. U. N.'s Note): The Danish is *makreel*, the Swedish *makrili* and the German *makrele*. Webster derives mackerel, a pimp, a bawd, from O. F. *maquereau*, from Danish *maker*, *makelaar*, a mediator, a broker, hence a go-between. Cf. O. H. G. *mahhari*, broker, agent, from *mahhôn*. to do. Cf. our *machinate*.

(S. P.'s Note): This interesting line of etymological speculation might be carried further, but it would lead us too far afield.

Like the *lenocinium* and the *meretricium* the *lupanar* no longer possessed the *droit de cité* except in the language of writers; the vulgar language looked upon it as a Gallo-Romanian tradition which had no reason for being. Nothing less resembled the lupanars of Rome than these dens of Prostitution in the cities of France. These infamous holes were described without distinction by the names of *borda* and *bordellum*, which cast *borde*, *bordel* and *bordeau* into the new dialect of the twelfth century. This Latin word is but the Saxon word *bord* Latinized; this Saxon word had no more to say than did the French word; indeed, it is identical with the latter. It is then a gratuitous effort of the imagination to see in *bordel* the words *bord* and *el*, because, it is said, the places of debauchery were situated at the edge of the water! The situation of these bad houses was not inevitably near a river; there would have been no object in this, either moral or sanitary; and there is no other satisfactory explanation. But in many circumstances, Prostitution did find lodgings near the water, especially when river navigation brought a great throng of merchants, passengers and boatmen who became the ordinary customers of the *bordellières* (*bordellariae*). The term *borda* was given more especially to an isolated cabin, a lodging for the night, situated preferably beside a road or a river, beyond the walls of the city, in a suburb or in the open country. The *borde* was distinct from the *maison*, as we see in this verse from the romance of *Aubery*:

*Ne trouvissiez ni borde ne maison;*

and in this other verse from the romance of *Garin*:

*Ni a meson ne borde ne mesnil.*

Generally this *borde* was to be found annexed to a small close or to a field; for in a contract of the year 1292, cited by Ducange in his *Glossary*, it is said that the abbot and the convent are obliged to concede an acre of land to every inhabitant of the



city who desires to set up a *borde* (*ad faciendum ibi bordam*). Prostitution, expelled from the cities, took refuge in these *bordes*, which were to be found far from the eyes of the urban police, and which gave rise to no scandal. These rural residences were inhabited only in certain seasons and on certain days by the tenants or proprietors; but Prostitution found in them at all times an assured shelter; that is why the public women took a lease on the *bordes* where they resided, when they were not content to come there at dusk to make a sojourn of a few hours. The debauchees who went to meet them there would leave the city under pretense of a promenade and arrive at their shameful destination by a circuitous route. The *borde* became changed into *bordel*, its diminutive, which became by imperceptible degrees a generic name of all the asylums of debauchery, whether in the country or in the interior of cities. We may attribute to the variations of the *patois* the different forms which this name took, which was pronounced, *bordeel*, and which degenerated into *bordiau*, and *bourdeau*, *bordelet* and *bordeliau*.

While the *bordels* remained outside the cities, vagabond Prostitution numbered in its secret army a throng of poor recruits, who did not even possess the means of renting a *borde*, and who, like the *lupae* and the *suburranae* of Rome, would stop passers-by along the road, behind the hedges, in the vineyards and the wheat-fields; they were called *women sitting in the hedges*, *those who had come out of the villages*, *daughters of the road*, *women of the fields*. (See Carpentier in his supplement to Ducange, on the words BORDA and CHEMINUS). Those who did not leave their lairs, but who laid their snares at the window were called *claustrariae*, *cloistrieres*. (See Carpentier, on the word CLAUSURAE.) Their cloisters, *claustra*, might well have been descendants of the *lustra* of antiquity, all the more so for the reason that the *claustra montium* were only established in isolated places, in the heart of the forests and in mountain gorges.

The lost women who found a dwelling in the *bordes* or *bordels* were designated by the epithet of *bordelieres* or *bourdelieres*. But this was not their only description; we have seen above that

they were called *putes* and *putians*, as a sign of contempt. They were not spared insulting names, and they were not distinguished, as in antiquity by descriptions which would frequently reveal their immodest habits, their mode of life, their origin and their costume. From the end of the twelfth century, they were called in bad part by the collective name of *garzia* or *gartia*, in French, *garce* or *garse*, which has come down to our days in the vocabulary of country folk to designate every sort of girl who is not married. We read in the *History of Bresse* by Guichenon (page 203): *Si leno vel meretrix, si gartio vel gartia alicui burgensi convitium dixerit*; and in the charter of privileges of the city of Seissel in 1285: *Si gartia dicat aliquid probohomini et mulieri*. This expression which reappears on every page of prose and verse from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, loses only in exceptional cases its primitive sense, and does not become an insult except in certain cases in which it is accompanied by an evil-sounding epithet; for the rest, we see, from the extract of Guichenon cited above, that the description of *garce* (*gartia*), even when employed in bad part, differed from that of prostitute (*meretrix*) in that it designated rather a vagabond girl, a *coureuse*, a servant girl. Et. Guichard, who desired to prove that all languages are descendants of the Hebraic, thought to connect the word *garce* with the Hebrew verb, analogous in sound and signifying *to prostitute oneself*. He failed to remark the fact that the words *garce* and *garzia* are far more ancient than the obscene signification which has been given them; thus, in the *proces-verbal* of the life and miracles of St. Yves, in the thirteenth century, *garcia* is found to have the sense of servant maid, *ancilla*. (See the Bollandists, *Sanct. maii*, Volume IV, 553.) It is a good deal more simple to say that *garce* is the feminine of *gars*, which, despite the finest etymologies, would appear to be a Gallic word, *wars*, and to have signified first of all a young warrior, a marriageable male. *Gars* became a low-Latin *garsio* and *garzio*, applied to valets, to thieves, to worthless folk, to camp followers of the army, and to libertines. One could not better show how a word originally honest and decent, comes gradually to be perverted and to take

on a shameful signification than by recalling a phrase in which Montaigne employs this word with the acceptation which it had in his time: "The result is a nation in which *garces* are prostituted at the doors of temples in order to assuage concupiscence."

This was not the only insulting expression which was made use of in the Middle Ages to designate prostitutes; they were called *fornicariae* and *fornicatrices*, *prostibulariae*, *prostantes*, *gyneciariae*, *lupanariae*, *ganeariae* in the low-Latin. These last three names were synonymous; they indicated the places where women of an evil life kept themselves, *genea*, *lupanar* and *gynecium*. The *prostantes* sold themselves (from the verb, *prostaræ*), the *prostibulariae* prostituted themselves, the *fornicariae* fornicated, the *fornicatrices* seduced to fornication. These different terms did not pass over into the French language, but those which had less of the Latin turn did: hence *ribaude*, *meschine*, *femme folle*, *femme de vie*. The *femme de vie*, *femina vitae*, appears to us, despite its Latin disguise, to have, for root, a Gallic obscenity. The *femme folle*, or *folieuse*, *mulier follis*, or *fatua*, owed her name to that famous Fete of Fools which we shall describe elsewhere as a last reflection of the mysteries of ancient Prostitution. The *meschine* was, in principle, a little servant maid, a slave girl; the *ribaude* was a woman who followed the army, a trooper's girl, a camp follower's woman. We shall describe in another chapter the *ribauds* of Phillip Augustus, when we come to establish the true origin of the word *roi* (king). We shall not report here the numerous etymologies which have been learnedly accumulated with regard to the root of the word *ribaude*, which exists in all the languages of Europe. We are sufficiently disposed to see this root in the Gallic word *baux* or *baud*, which signifies *joyous*, and which is left in our old tongue, called *gauoise*, by *Borel*, the substantive *baude*, joy, and the verb *ebaudir*, to rejoice. The name of the family of the *Baux*, or the *joyous ones*, which Languedocian tradition traces back to the sixth century, would give a sufficiently respectable age to the Celtic word *baux* or *baud*. This word has changed significance without changing form, in passing from the English language, where *baud* (*bawd*) is synonymous

with *lenon*. The word *baldo*, in Italian, has not been so much altered, for this word, derived from *baux*, is taken to mean *bold* or *impudent*. *Rebaldus* is the Latin translation of *rebaux*, composed of the emphatic preposition *re* and the original word *baux*, *baud*, or *bauld*.\* *Ribaud* and *ribaldus* are Latinized and Gallicized at the same time. These words were employed in good part before the reign of Phillip Augustus, when they fell into contempt by reason of the excesses of a sort of persons who had desired to be or *bauld*.\* *Ribaud* and *ribaldus* are Latinized and Gallicized at implied physical force and the robust constitution of a gay and well disposed man. Later this came to be the special designation of scamps and debauchees. All the languages at once adopted the degradation of *ribaix* and its compounded words. *Ribaudie* in French became synonymous with *prostitution*, as did *ribaldaglia*, which Mathieu Villani employs in this sense. (*Chron.* Book IV, Chapter 91). *Ribaud* then gave rise to *ribaude*, *ribalda*, which never possessed an honorable signification. According to the custom of Vergarac, this was a frightful insult when addressed to a person of birth or noble condition; but it was a little thing if this insult was employed to a woman of low degree, accompanied by no more material injuries. This singular passage from the *Coutume* de Bergerac is reported by the Benedictines, who were the continuators of Ducange. *Ribaude*, which gave rise very naturally to *ribaudaille* and *ribauderie*, continued to designate energetically every woman whose manners were disorderly or depraved.

The word *meschine*, which was habitually applied to *femmes folles de leur corps* (*women foolish with their bodies*) possessed ordinarily a character friendly rather than injurious; *meschine* did not come into use until after *meschin*. This word, essentially Gallic or Frankish, which our language still preserves in the word *mesquin*, the sense of which is not far from its root, implied first

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note): *Bawd*, *bold* and *bald* (It. *baldo*) are perhaps from a root more ancient than the Gothic *balths* or Armor. *maol*, meaning something akin to *naked*. To be bald, to be devoid of hair covering; to be bold, to disdain cover; to be a bawd, to disdain cover of modesty.



of all a *little* (masculine) *slave*, a *young servant*. *Meschinus* and *mischinus* are to be found from the tenth century in the monastic cartularies, as Ducange proves to us on a number of occasions; they signified *young serfs* and, by extension, *valets*. It is this latter sense which the word *meschin* affects more particularly in the language of the twelfth century; but then it is only taken in good part and is equivalent to *young lad*, *youth*. It recurs frequently in the romance of *Garin*, and always honorably, as in this verse:

*Vous estes jones jovenciaux et meschins.*

The feminine *meschine*, *meschina*, did not possess at first a less honorable sense; as witness this verse from the same source:

*Au matin lievent meschines et pucelles.*

But already, about the thirteenth century, the *meschines* had been shorn of their good renown, for Guillaume Guiart, in his *Branche des Royaux Lignages*, pictures them under colors none too flattering: following are four verses which make of them veritable lost women, since they are the companions of the *Cottareaux* (in 1183):

*Des sains corporaux des yglises  
Fesoient volez et chemises  
Communement a leurs meschines,  
En depit des oeuvres divines.*

From then on, *meschine*, in common language as in poetry, designated nothing more than a servant girl. Ducange cites an old poet, after a manuscript in the library of Coislin, to prove that *dame* (*lady*) and *meschine* were opposed to each other; this same poet in another place, defines thus the role of the *meschine*:

*En la chambre ot une mechine  
Qui moult est de gentille orine.*

In an ordinance relating to the Abbot of Bonnes-Esperance, this Abbot is assigned the sum of 20 pounds (for his government, for a servant and a *meschine*). The word *meschine* lent itself simultaneously to two different acceptations: sometimes it is a simple servant, practicing the duties of her state, and as Louis XI says in his *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*: "She is a *meschine*, attending to the common work of the household, as the beds, the bread, and other such affairs;" sometimes it is a debauched woman, who puts herself at the service of the first comer and who sells herself by retail. It is to be understood that *meschinage* which was at first synonymous with *service*, came gradually to specify the most indecent sort of service. The *meschinage* of the taverns and the gaming-houses was reputed infamous in the *Établissements* of St. Louis, as in the Roman law; nevertheless, St. Louis would have it that "the foolish girl who has gone into *meschinage* or into any other bad place to hire herself out" should be admitted by law, the same as her brothers and sisters, to a share in the paternal succession. (Book I, Chapter 138.)

Let us complete this Franco-Latin nomenclature of Prostitution in the Middle Ages by examining a very much used term which passed for Italian and which had been imported into France by the troubadours after the eleventh century. The consonants of the word *ruffian* indicates at first glance a midland and nonbarbarous origin. *Ménage* derives it from the name of a famous Italian lenon who was called *Rufo*, without perceiving the fact that this *Rufo* assuredly came long after the word ascribed to him. Other etymologists, not content with this problematic *Rufo*, have found in Terence a *Rufus* who practiced the same trade. They have even, by an abuse of erudition, connected this word with *fornicator*, by deriving it from the German *ruef*, which signifies *vault* or *arch*, and which would be thus a translation of *fornix*. But Ducange is much nearer the truth when he draws

attention to the fact that the Roman prostitutes, wearing blonde or red perukes, were called *ruffae*, according to the observations of Francois Pithou and Woverenus on Petronius. We shall complete the judicious remark of Ducange by saying that, undoubtedly, the word *ruffianus* was formed, in the low centuries, from *rufi* and from *anus*, two words joined without any ellipsis, or from *rufis* and *anûs*, two other words coupled by the aid of an ellipsis. As to seeking an analogy between *ruffian* and *fien*, *foenum* or *finum*, a sty, we must not forget in such a case that one is not to submit the syllable *ruf* to the etymologic interpretation invented by some dreamer or other who would see in *ruffian* a valet of the stable, *quod eruit finum*.

The copulation of *rufi* and *anus* or, if you will, of *rufia* and *anûs*, is more in accord with the true sense of the word *ruffian*, *ruffianus*, which is not only a lenon, a procurer, but also rather a debauchee, the habitu   of a bad house, a supporter of girls. We are not possessed, like M  nage and, above all, Le Duchat, of an etymologic effrontery or candor; we shall not endeavor to demonstrate why, since *rufia* signified a tanned hide, and *anus* an old woman, since *anus* also signified the rectum and *rufus* a *roux*, a mignon, these two words should lead directly to the profession of *ruffian*, a profession which was extended to the *ruffiane*. However this may be, the pocables, *ruffianus* and *ruffiana* only figure in the Middle Ages in the Italian writers who everywhere introduce us into the company of ruffians and prostitutes (*ruffiani* and *meretrices*). Ducange and Carpentier, cite a number of interesting passages from these writers; in one of these passages it is stated positively that *ruffian* is synonymous with *lenon* (*quilibet et quaelibet leno, qui et quae vulgariter ruffiani dicuntur*). *Ruffian* does not seem to have been introduced into France before the thirteenth century, and it was not greatly in vogue until the fifteenth century, when *italianisme* broke out in all parts of the Gallic idiom. This word, which was employed with various nuances, never invaded the language of the oratory, and its abjectness remained unrelieved.

Finally we shall mention still another word, which we have forgotten to speak of in its proper place, and which bears witness to the mysterious habits of Prostitution. The places of debauchery, the *bordels* were figuratively called *clapiers* (*hutches*), *claperii*, for the reason that the daughters of joy hid themselves in them like rabbits, *cuniculi* (in old French *conins*), in their holes. *Clapier*, according to Ménage, came from *lepus*, transformed into *lapus* and *lapinus*, which was pronounced *clapinus*; hence, *lapiarium* and *clapiarium*. According to Ducange, the snare for catching rabbits was called *clapa*, and since it was placed at the entrance of their holes, the latter came to usurp the name, which represented, by onomatopoeia, the sound or *clappement* of the trap at the moment the rabbit was taken. According to other scholars, *clapier* is derived from the Greek *kleptein*, which signifies *to hide*; from the Latin *lapis*, for the reason that the rabbit's holes were frequently but piles of stone or rocky earth, etc. Etymology means little; we shall indicate, with much reserve, the obscene similarity which French gaiety has discovered between the words *cunnus* and *cunniculus* or *cuniculus*, of which Martial did not suspect the indecent equivocation. It is certain that our bantering ancestors found a lubricious image in this comparison of a den of prostitutes to a rabbit hutch.\*

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note). It is possible that originally a play was intended on the O. Fr. *clapoir*, Dan. *klapoor*, Icl. *klappa*, each of which is equivalent to our clap (gonorrhea), noun and v. i. (See Wiseman.) But we should not overlook the O. H. G. *klump*, a crowd or mass, and A. S. *cleofan*, to split, to divide (hence to share, as expense), whence our word club (association or society). Mention should also be made of O. G. *klaffen*, to prate, and Wel. *clepiaw*, to babble; whence our obsolete verb *clepe*, to call or name, the sense being then a bedlam (warren or hutch full of) of gossip, scandal, ribaldry, etc. As to the obscenity which French gaiety has discovered between the words *cunnus* and *cunniculus* or *cuniculus*, the same equivoque is possible in English, remembering the old word *conny* (canuy) to know; *cony* (pl. *conies*), a rabbit; and the common term for the vagina of the female.





## CHAPTER VII

**I**N THE collection of ordinances of the kings of France of the third race, there is none to be found prior to St. Louis, relative to Prostitution; but we are not to believe, from this lacuna, that Prostitution had nearly disappeared in France, or that the legal authority had left her the absolute mistress of her acts, without surrounding her with a surveillance at once preventive and repressive. We believe, on the contrary, that the disorder of manners had increased as a result of the feudal wars which had desolated the country and halted the march of civilization; we believe also that the ancient legislation regarding prostitutes and their scandals had not ceased to be effective; but amid the permanent agitations which vexed society, there had undoubtedly been a great relaxation in the police laws, and the authorities had been rather concerned with assuring the protection of cities exposed to continual sieges and to all the consequences of an armed invasion. A sort of indulgent tolerance, had then, permitted Prostitution to gain ground in the cities, and especially in Paris, where it had been organized like the other branches of the State, with regulatory statutes, whether for the reason that the municipal administration approved this sort of thing or whether it merely blinked its eyes at the organized existence of Prostitution. We shall not find it difficult to prove that, under the kings prior to Louis IX public manners had been more depraved than in the ninth century, and that this corruption was of a character more odious than ever; we shall find, moreover, more than one contemporary witness who will testify as to how regular Prostitution has multiplied and become acclimated, so to speak, in the habits of the Parisian population.

This Prostitution, it is well to recognize the fact, possessed a happy influence over manners; for since the men of the North had mingled, by good will or by force, with the indigenous Franks and Romanian Gauls, vice against nature, like a devour-

ing contagion, had penetrated all classes of the nation and left its debauched imprint on the religious orders, as it had on the princely and royal families. Guillaume de Nangis, in recounting, in his *Chronicle*, the tragic death of the two sons and one daughter of Henry I, king of England, who were engulfed in the sea with a throng of English lords who had embarked upon the same ship, pictures this shipwreck as a punishment from Heaven, and does not hesitate to say that the victims were for the most part sodomites (*omnes fere sodomitica labe dicebantur et erant irretiti*). This horrible moral degradation, as we have established above, was to be met with everywhere, especially among the monks, and the Church afflicted with these excesses, which she was forced to hide in her bosom, could not refrain from striking with an anathema, these unworthy members. We shall see later that the condemnation of the Templars on the part of Boniface VIII and Phillip the Handsome, was but a terrible measure of justice against sodomy disguised in the habits of the Temple. Sodomy was also the secret bond of different heretical sects which sought to establish themselves by making a rapid propaganda with the aid of these impurities, and which quailed before the firm and rigid attitude of the higher clergy, and which the temporal power seconded with its executions and punishments. This abominable vice had become so inveterate among the people that the Manicheans, who renewed themselves under various names up to the fourteenth century, owed to it their monetary success and, at the same time, their implacable repression. In the presence of the hideous progress of such a scourge, we can understand how Prostitution might naturally be looked upon as a remedy for the evil, or at least as a dike opposed to its outburst. Jacques de Vitry, in his *Histoire Occidentale* (Chapter VII), has registered this curious and significant fact, that the public women, who were in the habit of brazenly stopping the ecclesiastics in the street, would address them as *sodomites*, when the latter refused to follow these dangerous sirens. "This shameful and detestable vice," he adds, "is so widespread in

this city; this poison, this pestilence, is so incurable that he who keeps one or more concubines is looked upon as a man of exemplary manners."

Jacques de Vitry, who furnishes this precious observation on the subject of manners in Paris at the end of the twelfth century, appears to have been concerned more particularly with painting a picture of Prostitution, which had taken possession of the University quarter, and which reigned there sovereignly. "In the same house," he says, "one finds schools below, and places of debauchery up above; on the first floor, the professors give their lessons; up above, debauched women practice their shameful trade and while they are quarreling among themselves or with their lovers, the savants are holding disputes and argumentations with their scholars." The *quartier* of the colleges and the schools was not peopled, at this epoch, with other than masters of arts and scholars; these latter, aged, the most of them, from twenty to twenty-five years, and belonging to all nations, formed a sort of undisciplined army of 150,000 individuals, who mocked the sergeants of the watch\* and who refused to permit the provost of Paris to mingle in their affairs; they protected thus the *femmes de vie* installed in their quarter, and they covered them with a veil of impunity so long as they did not cross the boundaries of this *lieu de franchise*. The rector and the *suppôts* of the University, knowing that youth has need of spending its ardent exuberance and its strength to the profit of the passions, did not meddle with these pleasures nor demand that the scholars live the lives of anchorites. Thus may be explained that interior which Jacques de Vitry has drawn from nature, and which pictures for us faithfully the state of Prostitution in the neighborhood of the *Écoles* of the Rue du Fouarre. It is probable, nevertheless, that this domiciliary Prostitution was not the only one which found a safeguard with the *Écoliers*; vagabond Prostitution, which corresponds to the ideas and the instincts of the time, must have found free reign in the Pre-aux-Clercs, that

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\*For the attitude of the students to the Parisian authorities, see *A Travers la Quartier Latin*, par Octave Charpentier, A. Plieque et cie., Paris, 1925.



rustic promenade of the *enfants prodigues* of the University, that vast plain, traversed by pretty rivulets bordered with willow groves, shaded by massive trees and cut by flowering hedges. This was certainly the rendezvous of the *filles de champs* and *de haies*, who had nothing to fear in this free asylum from the austere pursuits of the abbatial justice of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. The University saw to it that its privileges were respected, with regard even to the companions of its debaucheries.

The Pre-aux-Clercs was not the only refuge of vagabond Prostitution; the latter had also a retreat not less inviolable and one more convenient in the cold or rainy season. The *palais des thermes de Julien*, in which the kings of the first race had sojourned, had not been inhabited for a number of centuries, and the ruins of this vast Gallo-Romanian habitation, surrounded with vineyards and gardens, presented them, according to the expression of a contemporary poet, "an infinity of sinuous retreats, always favorable to secret acts, and mysterious hiding places, the accomplices of crime, since they spare the shame of those who commit crime." Jean de Hauteville, who makes us acquainted with the obscene use of the ancient palace of the Thermes under the reigns of Louis VII and Phillip-Augustus, tells us what he had seen with his own eyes, in his misanthropic poem entitled *Archithrenius*: "It is there," he says, with less indignation than pity, "it is there that the thickness of the trees, usurping the function of the night, is an incessant protection to furtive love and frequently hides from severe glances the last symptoms of expiring modesty; for the one who desires to commit a bad action seeks the shadows, and her shame, which feels more at ease in obscure places, loves to wrap itself in the veils of the night." Phillip-Augustus, in 1218, made a donation of these Roman ruins to his chamberlain, Henri, Concierge of the Palais de la Cité, probably with the duty of enclosing them with walls and expelling Prostitution. Such was also the intention of Phillip-Augustus, when he caused the cemetery of the Holy Innocents to be surrounded with a well built wall, for it was here that nocturnal Prostitution held forth without respect to the dead

who were its witnesses. Guillaume le Breton, in speaking of this cemetery in his epic poem, the *Philippide*, waxes indignant at this insolent profanation: *Et quod pejus erat, meretricabatur in illo* (Book I, verse 441).

It was the same in all the places neighboring this enclosure; Prostitution came there to pitch its camp at the fall of day, and the vile creatures who made use of it would wait there for their prey along the most frequented paths. We read, in the *Grandes Chroniques de Saint-Denis*, this detail which goes back to the reign of Phillip-Augustus: "And also those foolish women who go to the *bordeaux* and to the corners of streets there to abandon themselves, for a small price, to all without fear or shame." This is the only passage in a writer of the thirteenth century in which there is question of the wages of debauchery; and although the price of the favors of a street corner prostitute were not fixed, we cannot doubt that it was very low, undoubtedly on account of excessive competition. Prostitution had still another *champ de foire* beyond the city, on the road to Vincennes, in a place sown with thickets and groves, beyond the Porte Saint-Antoine. Dubruel reports in his *Antiquites de Paris*, that this place was the ordinary theatre of those attacks upon modesty which the *écoliers* committed with impunity on the wives, daughters and chambermaids of the Parisian bourgeoisie. They erected at first a stone cross, called the *Croix Benoiste*, in the center of this ill-famed wood; but the setting up of this cross served but to attract a greater number of *hommes et femmes de dissolution* who gave themselves, under pretext of devotion and pilgrimage,\* to the most criminal promiscuity. A certain creature,

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\*These "pilgrimages" *extra muros* appear to have been popular in Italy as in France, during the Middle Ages. See Aretino's *La Cortigiana*, Act IV, dialogue between Arcolano, Togna and Alvigia. Alvigia the procuress, is gossiping with Togna, the baker's wife, when the baker, Arcolano, comes in. Alvigia endeavors to throw him off the track:

Alv. There's no other feast day that I know of this week, daughter, except the pilgrimage to San Lorenzo *extra*. . . .

(*Enter Arcolano.*)

Arc. What are you two gossiping about?

Alv. *Debita nostra debitoribus*. Monna Antonia was just asking me about the pilgrimage to San Lorenzo *extra muros*. *Sic nos dimittimus*.

Arc. I don't like these carryings-on.

famous for his conversions, Foulques de Neuilly, Abbot of Saint-Denis, appeared suddenly in this band of libertines and prostitutes; standing on the base of the Croix Benoiste, he summoned them to renounce their damnable habits and to do penance by consecrating themselves to God. The women who heard him, and who belonged to the dregs of the people, felt themselves moved to repentance and foreswore their infamous trade by cutting off their hair and becoming the first religious of the Abbey Saint-Antoine-des-Champs, which recruited its community from all stages of Prostitution. The poor wretches whom the Croix Benoiste had viewed abandoning themselves *for a small and villainous price*, now made processions about this cross, with naked feet and *en chemise*; some afterwards married honorably; others vowed themselves to the contemplative life; but in the beginning, about the year 1190, this strange convent assembled under the same roof as many men as women, and we may suppose that, despite the eloquent preachings of Foulques de Neuilly and his successor, Pierre de Roissy, this mixture of the two sexes was not calculated to inspire virtue in the ancient prostitutes and the converted debauchees. It was the illustrious Bishop of Paris, Maurice de Sully, who, in the year 1196, removed the men and put the women under the rule of Citeaux, threatening to expel them all if they did not mend their ways.

Besides these miserable vagabonds who exploited the environs of the city, and who fell by night like birds of prey on belated travelers, there were, in certain quarters and on certain streets, *bordeaux* and *clapiers*, which received numerous visitors before the hour of curfew, and which paid to the treasury an impost which was an imitation of the Roman *vectigal*. Proofs of these facts are lacking at this period, but inasmuch as we are to meet them later in abundance, we must believe that they disappeared during the reigns prior to that of Saint Louis. Tradition, which is never to be disdained, especially when it concerns circumstances mentioned at the time they occurred, this tradition, preserved by Sauval in the seventeenth century (*Recherch. et Antiq.*

*de Paris*, Vol. II, page 638), informs us that, well prior to Louis IX "the scandalous women had statutes, certain habits which made them recognizable and even their own judges." This tradition was perpetuated among the women of an evil life, who still pretended in the time of Sauval "that the Magdalen's Day had been a fete with their predecessors from the time they composed a body politic and had their own streets and their own costumes, and even before Saint Louis had obliged them to wear certain habits in order to distinguish them from decent women." Unfortunately, the details which Sauval furnishes us on this singular subject, do not figure in his printed work, from which they have been expurgated, along with the celebrated treatise on the *Bordels de Paris*, out of modesty on the part of the editors; but it is impossible not to suppose that Souval had under his eyes sufficient proof of the existence of these statutes of Prostitution, if not the statutes themselves, which must have had the force of law prior to the *Livre des Métiers* of Etienne Boileau. This *Prud'homme* was ashamed to admit in his collection of the privileges and customs of the various arts and trades, a collection in which he professes so much hatred for Prostitution, a special chapter devoted to the regulation of a public scandal which it was his object to do away with, by giving it no place in municipal jurisprudence. These statutes, relating to *Putage*, which are to be discovered here and there in the history of manners, were inevitably established and maintained by force of custom, but were not, perhaps, approved and confirmed by the kings. We are authorized to think that if, in a time when the *Métiers* and the *Marchandises* had their special code, tolerated Prostitution did not possess its own, the Bordelieres would not have formed a separate corporation as they did under the jurisdiction of the *Roi des Ribauds*. The title of Roi (king), attributed to the head or principal master of a corporation, was always inseparable from the statutes of that corporation; *la ribaudie* had its *roi des ribauds*, while *la Mercerie* had its *roi des merciers* and *la menestrandie* its *roi des ménétriers*.



We shall see later that nothing was lacking except statutes to prove that the public women of Paris had very anciently constituted a trade body. Undoubtedly we are not at liberty to supplement the loss of these statutes so far as the reception of prostitutes in the community, their degrees of apprenticeship, the public tax, the revenues paid into the treasury, alms and fines are concerned—in a word, all the interior organization of the *métier*; but we do possess precise information regarding the quarters and streets assigned to debauchery, on which had been fixed the distinctive mark of the women vowed to this shameful industry, and with regard to their hours of labor and the sumptuary laws of which they availed themselves. One anecdote relating to Prostitution appears to us very important from this point of view, all the more so for the reason that it has not yet been understood by those who have drawn on the *Chronicle* of Geoffroy, Prior of Vigéois (*Nova bibloth, manusc. of P. Labbe. vol. I, page 309*); “Queen Marguerite, being in church while the kiss of peace was being exchanged by the assistants, seeing a woman adorned with magnificent inventments and taking her for a bride, gave her the kiss of peace. This woman was a ribaude who followed the court (*meretricem regiam*). The Princess, instructed as to her mistake, complained to the King, who thereupon directed that public women should wear in Paris (*Parisiis*) the *surcot* or cape (*chlamyde seu cappâ uti*), so that they might be distinguished thus from those who had been legitimately married.” This curious anecdote, which figures in a *Chronicle* dating from the year 1184, can in no fashion be assigned to the reign of Saint Louis and Queen Marguerite, wife of this King, since the author of the *Chronicle* died more than sixty years before the marriage of Saint Louis with Marguerite of Provence. This incident, which the Prior of Vigéois had heard related in the depths of his Limousin monastery, bears an incontestable date, that of 1172, since the Princess Marguerite, daughter of Louis VII and Queen Constance, had been affianced to Henri au Courtmantel, son of the King of England, and had been

queened by the Archbishop of Rouen. We may, nevertheless, leave to this incident the date of 1158, which the chronicler assigns it, by supposing that, in his *Chronicle*, written after 1172, he has described as *Queen* Marguerite the Princess who had not yet been crowned and who was not more than six years of age at the time her childish innocence was defiled by the kiss of a prostitute.

It is extraordinary that the fact in question should not have been recounted elsewhere than in the *Chronicle* of the Prior of Vigemois, whom many historians have confounded with Geoffroi of Beaulieu, thus dating from the reign of Louis IX a detail which assuredly belongs to the reign of Louis VII, and which proves that this king had drawn up against women of an evil life an ordinance which has not come down to us. We may draw from this fact more than one deduction which is interesting for our subject. In the first place, this prostitute, whom the chronicler calls *royal*, was she one of the daughters of joy *following the court* whom we shall meet with down to the reign of Francis I under the same description, or was she merely one of the ordinary subjects of the king of the ribaldries, one of the women of his royal corporation? Moreover, it is certain that Louis VII, by subjecting the trade of public women to certain conditional costumes, thereby implicitly recognized the legal existence of these women and authorized them to practice their culpable commerce within the confines of Paris (*Parisiis*). Finally, as to the surname of the husband of the Princess Marguerite, Henri au Courtmantel, may it not have some indirect analogy with the adventure of his wife, and who was the cause of the *filles d'amour* not being able to wear any more the cape or long cloak. It is interesting to remark, in any case, that, from this epoch, the prostitutes of Paris composing the corporation *des ribaudes* dressed themselves *de court*, like the meretrices of Rome, clad in the toga and not in the stole.

The corporation of *filles amoreuses* was, then, in the time of Louis VII, evidently in a state of prosperity, which is sufficiently

manifested by the luxury of its *liveries* or trade costumes. Sauval, in another passage of his precious compilation (vol. II, page 450), declares positively that the statute of this indecent corporation had recourse for its secret government, to the States of Orleans in 1560. In default of these statutes, we have not even discovered proofs of the sorority of the Magdalen, which Sauval assures us existed, without saying to what parish it was attached or what were its privileges, its indulgences, and its fetes. It is thus merely by conjecture, although one sufficiently plausible, that we shall assign as the principal seat of this impure sorority a small church of the Magdalen, which existed with this designation in the eleventh century, and which later took the name of Saint-Nicolas. The place occupied by this old church, which disappeared in the revolution of '89, is now filled with private houses. We shall not dare to sustain the thesis that this was the scene of that kiss of peace given by a princess to a courtesan. The curé of this parish bore the title of arch priest, and despite the small importance of the parish and the church, he could not but be proud of his title on account of the sorority of Notre-Dame-aux-Bourgeois, which appears to have succeeded that of the Magdalen, when Saint Louis essayed the radical suppression of Prostitution. It is to this circumstance that we shall assign the change of name of the church, which, although always dedicated to the Magdalen, appears to have endeavored to purify itself by changing its name to Saint-Nicolas. However, the image of the Magdalen still figured on the great altar, and her relics were still exposed in a shrine of gilded silver. Almost all the historians of Paris, including Dubruel, who have spoken of this ancient church of the Cité, would have it that Saint-Nicolas was its primitive patron; Dubruel and Sauval place in one of its chapels, enriched at the expense of a confiscated Jewry after the expulsion of the Jews under Phillip-Augustus, the confraternity of the *Poissonniers* and the *Bateliers*, who undoubtedly did not resent the proximity of the sorority *des ribaudes*. This church was the only one which possessed relics of the Saint that

were venerated, and we are not to believe, as an obscure passage of Dubruel would give us to understand, that these relics had not been deposited there until 1491, by Louis de Beaumont, Bishop of Paris. This bishop merely changed the reliquary. This consisted not merely of locks of hair (*de capillis*) of the Magdalen, but also of a portion of the skin of her head, detached from the place where our Lord had laid his hand, saying: "Beware of touching me!"

All the dissolute women agreed in honoring the Magdalen as their patron, without worrying about making a choice among the different saints whom legion offered them under this name. It appears that they also paid a cult to Saint Mary the Egyptian, who had been, before her conversion, a celebrated prostitute. A tradition that is almost contemporary permits us to verify the fact that the chapel dedicated to this Saint, in the street which has become the Rue de la Jussienne, in place of *de l'Egyptienne* or *de la Gyppecienne*, was the parish affected by public women from the twelfth century; they frequented this chapel, they went there to have masses said, they burned candles there and brought there their offerings, the tithes of their shameful trade; they came there on pilgrimages from all points of the city, and nothing was stranger that their ex-voto offerings and their artificial bouquets suspended about the image of their patron. In 1660, the curé of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, whose dependency this chapel was, caused to be erected in it a stained glass window which was to be seen for more than three centuries and which became an object of scandal to pious persons. This window represented a saint upon a boat, raising up her robe and preparing to pay her passage to the boatman, with this inscription, which has undoubtedly been revised: "How the Saint offered her body to the boatman for her passage." We see from this anecdote why it was the boatmen of the Seine had adopted the same patron as the prostitutes. It is probably that the sorority of the *ribaudes* was transferred from the church of the Magdalen to a chapel of Saint Mary the Egyptian, when the great sorority of the Virgin



Mary *Notre Dame aux seigneurs, prêtres, bourgeois et bourgeoises de la ville de Paris* was established in 1168 in this church, perhaps on the occasion when a daughter of joy had outraged the forehead of a daughter of France by giving her the kiss of peace or by receiving it from her. The king and the queen were, from its foundation, members of this confraternity of Notre-Dame, which we are surprised to see placed under the auspices of the Magdalen. As to the chapel of Saint Mary the Egyptian, it was erected beyond the walls, in the environs of the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents, which was at that time one of the most ill-famed centers of vagabond Prostitution.

When Louis IX mounted the throne, his first thought was not absolutely to proscribe in his realm legal Prostitution which had been tolerated if not permitted; but he did endeavor to combat it and diminish it, with the arms of religion and the resources of charity. "Never," says Sauval, "have there been in the kingdom so many women of an evil life as at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and never, on the other hand, had they been punished with more rigor." Guillaume de Seligny, Bishop of Paris, convoked the prostitutes of the city and endeavored to make them blush for their ignoble trade; some renounced their calling to embrace a decent life and marry; others demanded the cloister to expiate their sins. Guillaume then went to find the young King who had just succeeded his father, Louis VIII, and whose soul was filled with the pious instructions of his mother, the virtuous Queen Blanche. This Prince marveled at the beautiful conversions which the Bishop had made, and in order not to lose the fruit of these conversions, he set about founding a house of refuge destined for female sinners whom Grace had touched. He was about to open this house in a close situated in the Rue Saint-Jacques and belonging to his confessor and chaplain, Robert Sorbon, whom he desired to place at the head of this community of penance; but he revised his plan upon reflecting that the Schools of the Rue du Fouarre provided threatening neighbors for the new converts. He placed the latter, therefore, at a distance from the *écoliers*

in the country on the other side of the city, and he ceded them a vast tract of land where he caused to be erected for them a church, cloisters, dormitories and various buildings enclosed by substantial walls. This monastery, which later became a hospital, occupied all the space where the *quartier du Caire* has been constructed since the revolution. There were gardens and vineyards in this species of fortress, which was called, says Joinville, the *maison des Chartriers*. We do not know where it got its name of *maison des filles-dies* which remained with it; we must believe that it was a piece of popular malice which thus baptized those religious whom the devil had subjected to a none too edifying apprenticeship. However this may be, this name of *Filles Dies*, which had been at first but an epigram, came to be taken seriously, even by those who bore it.

A satiric poet of this time, Rutebeuf, mocks these *Filles Dies* and their name as not being appropriate to their antecedents; but one might deduce from these verses of Rutebeuf that the penitents of Guillaume de Seligny had been at first called *Femmes-Dieu*:

*Diex a mon de filles avoir  
Mès je ne poy oncques savoir  
Que Diex eust fame en sa vie!*

Rutebeuf understands by the term *lignage de Marie* supplying *Madeleine* all the personnel of Prostitution, among whom Saint Louis had found his *Filles Dies*; "And he caused," related Joinville, "a great multitude of women to be placed in a hostelry, who out of poverty had fallen into the sin of lust, and he gave them four hundred pounds rent to keep them." This donation of four hundred pounds in rent was considerable, by reason of the enormous value of silver, and all the world was astonished that the Daughters of God should have been better treated than the *Quinze-Vingts* who had but three hundred pounds in revenue. The *Filles Dies* were but two hundred in the beginning, but they received constantly into their hospitable house those lost women

whom penance had snatched from debauchery. This monastery had for *maître proviseur et gouverneur* a priest whom the Bishop of Paris called his *well beloved in Jesus Christ*, and whom the religious named *father in God*. This was not the only foundation of the same sort which the holy King encouraged with his counsels and his deniers; "And he set up," reports Joinville, "in a number of places in his kingdom houses of pious persons and he gave them rents that they might live and command that they should receive those who desired to be countenanced and to live chastely."

Louis IX did his best to stem thus the torrent of Prostitution, but he did not succeed in reforming manners, which the Crusades had rendered still more perverse; for the crusaders imitated the Musselmans and set up veritable harems filled with slave girls purchased in the bazaars of Asia. "The common people were taken with foolish women," says Joinville, "confessing thus the principal cause of the disasters which followed that Crusade in which the King had been made a prisoner by the infidels. This wise Prince knew to what it was he had to attribute his disasters; and so, upon recovering his liberty, he dismissed a number of officers of his house because he had been advised that these libertines had set up their brothel (*tenoient leur bordiau*) on a projection of rock near his tent. Vainly he endeavored to banish from his camp debauchery and lechery; his severest orders merely showed the impotence of his chaste efforts against these outbursts of lust. While he was at Caesarea, he judged according to the laws of the country a knight who had been taken in a brothel (*au bordel*). The guilty one had to choose between two equally dishonorable courses: the ribaude with whom he had been taken in the act had to lead him *en chemise*, with a cord bound to his *genetaires* (genital parts) through the camps; otherwise, he was to abandon his horse and his armour to the good pleasure of the King and be expelled from the army. The knight preferred the last punishment and left. Louis IX, although he did his best to inspire in his servants a noble passion for beauty,

had to groan at witnessing the progress of social demoralization. Finally, after his return from Palestine, as though to render solemn homage to the memory of his pious mother for whom he still wept, he endeavored to destroy Prostitution by prohibiting it, without exception, throughout his realm, in the provinces of the north as well as in those of the midland (*Languedoc* and *Languedoil*).

It was in an ordinance of the month of December, 1254, that he introduced this memorable article, which, hidden among many others less important, decreed in a definitive manner the suppression of houses of debauchery and the banishment of women of evil life; "Item, common ribaudes shall be banished as well from the fields as from the cities; and when they had been properly warned, their goods shall be seized by the judges of the place or by their authority, and they shall be despoiled of all they possess; and whoever shall rent a house to a ribaude or who shall receive a ribaude in his house, he shall be held to pay to the bailiff of the place, or to the provost, or to the judge as much as the pension (rent) amounts to in a year." But Saint Louis was not slow in perceiving that Prostitution was a necessary scourge in halting greater evils in the social order.





## CHAPTER VIII

IT IS here that we have to introduce a singular personage with whom history does not make us acquainted, at least under his characteristic name, until the reign of Phillip-Augustus, but who might have been the contemporary of Charlemagne. The *roi des ribauds*, *rex ribaldorum*, king of the ribalds or ribaldries, was, evidently, in the beginning, the sovereign judge of Prostitution at the court of the kings of France. A large number of scholars from Jean Boutillier to Gouye de Laonguemare, have engaged in learned researches and given bent to ingenious dissertations with the object of determining the prerogatives, rank and duties of this bizarre officer of the royal house; they have cited the texts of ordinances, exhumed new facts, drawn upon the *Trésor des Chartes*, and sought the truth amidst a mass of contradictory truths; but they have not been able to agree as to the true character of the king of the ribalds, for the reason that they have systematically endeavored either to exalt or debase him in his functions, which were as complex as they were far-reaching, as bizarre as they were terrible. After so many works of erudition and criticism before clearing up this obscure subject, we shall ourselves launch an inquiry regarding the king of the ribalds, whom we regard as the solemn precursor of the police commissaries of today. We believe we shall be able, from this point of view, to bring to light a sufficiently impressive historical development in our inquiry regarding this ancient officer of the court, intimately attached to the history of Prostitution in France.

Nearly all the authors who have spoken of the king of the ribalds, and who have endeavored to define his attributes, have been more or less deceived in their conclusions for the reason that they have considered but one of the numerous phases of this personage and his office. Thus, Jean Boutillier, who wrote his

*Somme Rurale* about the year 1460, represents the king of the ribalds as *executor of the sentences and commands of the marshals and the provosts* in the royal suite; Jean le Ferron makes of him the first sergeant of the *maîtres d'hôtel du roi*; Carondes makes him the *sergent* or the *commissaire du prévôt de l'hôtel*; Claude Fauchet makes him the *concierge* of the royal palace; Belleforest makes him *provost of the king's house*; Ragueau calls him the *grand maître des filles puliques*; Étienne Pasquier refers to him as a *bailiff* or *seneschal* of the ribauds. Each of them gives to the king of the ribalds a particular physiognomy, a power more or less restrained, and a dignity more or less considerable, without taking account of the successive changes wrought by time in an institution which comprised many very diverse duties. To assemble in chronological order all the views of historians and jurisconsults regarding the mysterious duties of the king of the ribalds would go to show that not one among them has explained the role which the officer of the palace played at the time his office was created or the decadence which his office has undergone as others came to be established in the king's house at the expense of the privileges and rights of this one. The king of the ribalds ceased to exist when his office came to be looked upon as a shameful one, when ancient authority had passed into many hands, and when his competitors bearing honorable names, began sharing during his lifetime the duties which had been assigned to him, after his post had fallen into discredit rather than into desuetude. This last king of the ribalds in the court of France, after having seen the finest flowers in his crown disputed and snatched away by the provosts of the royal house, the concierge of the palace, the provosts of marshals and other officers more recent than himself, had the chagrin of witnessing, upon the accession of Francis I, the rest of his old supremacy disappear, that supremacy which he had exercised over Prostitution *suivant la cour*; he saw this supremacy pass into the hands of a *dame des filles de joie*, and it was thus that his sceptre was forced to surrender to the distaff.

We have remarked, in citing a capitulary of Charlemagne on the interior policing of the royal domains, that the officers of the palace (*ministeriales palatini*), assigned to the surveillance and guarding of these domains, possessed many points of analogy with the kings of the ribalds whom we find four centuries later exercising the same surveillance in the king's household. In short, these *ministeriales palatini*, among whom the great officers of the crown originated, were required to see to the expulsion from the royal residences of every suspected individual, man or woman, who might have entered there. It was especially vagabonds (*gadales*) and prostitutes (*meretrices*) who had to fear the jurisdiction of the *ministerial polican*, who judged sovereignly all cases of this nature and caused the delinquents to be beaten with rods. We have here the first office of the king of the ribalds, and we may say, with every appearance of reason, that if he was not so called before the reign of Phillip-Augustus, he nevertheless performed similar duties under Charlemagne. It is altogether natural this office should have been first established on those vast farms (*villae*) or centers of agrarian and manufacturing exploitation, which the French kings possessed in various parts of their Empire, the revenues from which constituted the chief wealth of the royal treasury. The serfs, male and female, subjected to certain administrative police laws, were the masters neither of their bodies nor their time; care was taken to remove from them every temptation to idleness and Prostitution; their work, their health and their manners were thus protected by a paternal provision. It was, then, very important that unknown persons should not be introduced into the gynaeceums and the dormitories; the regularity of communal life would have suffered at the unwholesome contact with women of evil life, and it would have required but the presence of a leper, a debauchée, a thief or a mendicant to spread physical or moral contagion among the peaceful population of these secular retreats, where several thousands of slaves of both sexes were gathered in one place. The officer whose special duty it was to



prevent intrusion in a royal villa would appear to have been the concierge; and his office, in those times, was equivalent to that of head butler, chief chamberlain, and grand seneschal. It required but a change in name to produce the king of the ribalds.

The Merovingian and Carolingian kings, accompanied by a numerous suite of officers and servants would go from one domain to another to take up their residence, and the multitude of persons who followed them would inevitably be increased by a number of foreign women attracted by desire for gain which they hoped to achieve through debauchery. There was necessity, then, for a permanent and special authority to keep order in this throng and to carry out orders which demanded a prompt and irrevocable execution, whether the king was *en voyage en chevauchée* or reposing in his own domain. Hence the appointment of an officer or *ministerial* of the palace, having the right of life and death over every individual who caused trouble or disorder in the house of the king. Aimoin (Book V, Chapter 10) reports that Louis le Debonnaire expelled from the palace an immense troop of women supposed to be attached to the service of the Queen and the King's sisters (*omnem coetum femineum, qui per maximum erat; palatio excludi indicavit*) and of these exception was made but of a small number of followers who were judged indispensable to the needs of the royal service. But undoubtedly, these women were not slow in reappearing and the courts of kings, queens and princes became the objective of all starveling ambitions, of all interested vices, of all low beings. It may be readily conceived that the expeditive justice of the king of the ribalds was in full force before his name had come to describe his customary duties, and to indicate the sort of folk who came more directly under the jurisdiction of his tribunal, from which there was no appeal. This descriptive name does not appear before the reign of Phillip-Augustus.

It was during this reign that the word *ribaldus*, or ribaud, the etymology of which we have elsewhere studied, made its appear-

ance in the vulgar tongue and began to be used from then on in an unsavory sense. It was used to designate those of one or the other sex who had no profession and who were to be found wandering and pillaging about the *ost* or *chevauchée* of the king, living by Prostitution, by theft, by gaming or by alms. This degraded throng had grown prodigiously with the Crusades, until in an army the number of stragglers and valets following the court came to exceed that of the combatants. Among these camp followers, always ready for pillage, there were women who fed the fires of incontinence and impudicity under the oriflamme of the king and under the banners of his vassals. Phillip-Augustus conceived the idea of turning to his own profit a necessary evil: in place of seeking to disembarass himself of the scourge of ribaldry (*ribaudie*) by threats and punishments, which had proved futile when attempted, he organized into a paid band these parasitic hordes who struck more fear in the enemy than the army which they followed like a cloud of devouring locusts. Historians are silent as to the manner in which he enrolled these *enfants perdus* and as to how he held them and diciplined them to military service; but it may be supposed that he left them in large part to their debauched and lecherous habits, that he winked at their detestable excesses, and that he did not restrain them from taking with them to war as many women as might be recruited along the way. However this may be, this band of ribalds, composed of the dregs of a vagabond and drafted soldiery, distinguished itself by such feats of arms, by such marvelous strokes, by so many evidences of bravery and intrepidity, that Phillip-Augustus made of it an élite corps, specially attached to his own person. The chroniclers say the King made use of it to assure himself against the daggers of assassins, that the Old Man of the Mountain was unavailing against him and that one after another came only to hurl themselves on the naked swords of these ribald followers of the Most Christian King. These ribalds accompanied Phillip-Augustus everywhere in his wars, in which they did not spare their own blood, animated as

they were by an ardor for pillage. Guillaume le Breton, who is pleased to describe their prowess in his *Philippide*, paints them as unconquerable heroes who recoiled before no danger, and who do not even deign to make use of armour.

*Et ribaldorum nihilominus agmen inerme,  
Qui numquam dubitant in quaevis ire pericle.*

Elsewhere, the poet shows them to us laden with booty:

*Nec munus armigeri, ribaldorumque manipuli,  
Ditati spoliis, et rebus, equisque subibant.*

When Phillip-Augustus comes to besiege Tours, after having subjugated Poitou, it is a ribald captain (*buce ribaldo*) whom he chooses to seek a ford across the Loire; the ford being miraculously (*quasi per miracula*) found by this captain, the army crosses the river and the *ribalds of the king* (*ribaldi regis*, says Rigord), who are accustomed to lead the assault (*qui primos imbetus in expugnandis munitionibus facere consueverunt*) run to the ladders, and the city does not wait until it has been taken and sacked to open its gate to the King.

From these passages and many others of the same sort, it is certain that the ribalds of Phillip-Augustus formed a very redoubtable militia, but one with little discipline and capable of all sorts of violences. The King, in recognition of their services, did not demand of them the same submission and the same disciplinary duties he did from the rest of his militia; nevertheless, since it was impossible, from the bad example it would otherwise have set, to leave all crimes unpunished in this disorderly troop, which barely recognized the voices of its leaders, and which, when it was not engaged in battle, had no other occupation than debauchery, dice-playing, drunkenness and blasphemy—for this reason, the King confided the supreme command of these redoubtable wretches to one of the high officers of his house, to whom was given the duty of policing the interior of

the royal dwelling and *ost*, and who exercised conditionally a redoubtable authority over the authors of crimes of every sort committed within his jurisdiction. This officer of the palace was surrounded with the prestige that comes from respect and terror; for he was followed everywhere by a jailor and an executioner; with him there was never any interval between condemnation and execution; he pronounced the death penalty as readily as he did lighter ones, from which he sometimes drew a profit for himself. The office of king of the ribalds came to be a very lucrative one, on account of the criminal fines as well as the revenues which came from the gaming houses, the taverns and the public women. He had also his share of the booty which the ribalds brought back from their expeditions, and he also claimed a certain right in the prisoners of war. We read, in the list of knights who were taken in the battle of Bouvines in 1214: *Rogerus de Wafalia. Hunc habuit Rex Ribaldorum, quia dicebat se esse servientem*. This important passage, cited by Ducange, proves that the king of the ribalds assumed the character of *sergeant-at-arms* to the king in time of war, but it does not permit us to decide whether this officer of the French crown had to take an active role in the battles or not and whether or not he fought at the head of his band like the other captains. We might suppose this to be the case from the *Roman de la Rose*, composed in the thirteenth century by Guillaume de Lorris, who makes of the king of the ribalds a captain, when the *Dieu d'amour* assembles his army to deliver *Bel-accueil* from his prison; but the choice which he makes of *Faux-semblant*, in conducting the rabble (*ribaudoille*) to the assault, is sufficient evidence that the bad reputation of the soldiers redounded on their chief. Following are the verses of the *Roman de la Rose* in which Dieu D'Amour summons Faux-semblant to outline the conduct which he is to pursue:

*Faux-semblant, par tel convenant,  
Tu seras à moy maintenant.  
Et à nos amis aideras,*



*Et point tu ne les greveras,  
Ains penseras les enlever  
Et tous nos ennemis grever.  
Tien soit le pouvoir et le baux,  
Car le roy seras des ribaux.*

It is clear that, in this citation, as Pasquier observes, the king of the ribalds is represented under the figure of a captain at arms, and not as a magistrate. We have room, however, to suppose that he might have been one and the other, when we recall the unruly character of the ribalds of Phillip-Augustus, even when they were organized as the King's bodyguard. A chief who did not possess the authority of a judge would never have been able to discipline this horde of wretches, whom fear alone kept in the path of duty. All the histories of this epoch are full of sinister portraits which make us acquainted with the dangerous and difficult mission of the king of the ribalds. Listen to Guillaume de Neubrige (Book V, Chapter 2): "Certain *enfants-perdus* of that species of men who are called *ribauds*." Listen to Mathieu Pâris: "Thieves, banished men, fugitives and the excommunicated, whom France commonly confounds under the name of *ribauds*." But the manner of life of these ribalds is nowhere better described than in the *Chronicle* of Longpont, where the prior of the abbey demands of Jean de Montmirel what he expects to do in the world. "I purpose to be a ribald!" proudly replies the young man, who is later to become a canonized saint. "Can it be true!" cries the stupefied friar; "do you aspire then to become one of those villainous fellows who are as despicable before God as they are before men? Do you know that in order to put yourself on a footing with such criminals, it is necessary for you to swear like them, to perjure yourself incessantly, to play at dice, to carry a sign-board (*écriteau*—*tabellam comportare*), to carry with you a concubine (*pellicem circumducere*) and to be constantly drunken with wine?" One can readily imagine that brawls and murders were frequent among such bandits, and that the king of the ribalds must fre-

quently have had to intervene in order to bring peace among these convicts, who were to be seen everywhere escorted by their female companions, as rapacious, as turbulent and as incorrigible as themselves. It is probable that the company composed of the king's ribalds was disbanded after the death of Phillip-Augustus, possibly following some revolt; for if the ribalds still figure in all the Crusades, in all the wars and campaigns, they are no longer different from the stragglers of the army; they are badly armed, badly clad, so badly that the proverb, *naked as a ribald*, became prevalent about the year 1230, according to an ancient manuscript *Chronicle*, from which Ducange has extracted a few verses. Guillaume Guiart, who introduces the ribalds into his historical poem of the *Royaux Lignages*, depicts them under the most miserable colors, sometimes:

*Bruient soudoiers et ribaus,  
Qui de tout perdre sont si baus;*

Sometimes:

*Ribauz, qui volentiers oidivent,  
Par coustume d'antiquité,  
Queurent aux murs de la cité.*

Sometimes:

*Ribaus, qui del 'ost se departent,  
Par les chans cà et là s'espardent:  
Li uns une pilete porte;  
L'autre, croc ou massue torte.*

Finally, they are no longer regular or paid troops, they are pillagers who devour the country through which they pass in the royal train, and who, recruiting themselves on all sides, form redoubtable bands of *aventuriers*, *rutiers*, *cottereaux*, and *bravancs*, who, with their horrible excesses, continued to multiply in France up to the reign of Charles V: "Such fellows," says an old and unpublished *French Chronicle* cited by Ducange,

“such fellows as *cottereaux*, brigands, *gens de compagnie*, pillagers, robbers, thieves, they are all one and they are infamous fellows, dissolute and excommunicated.”

The king of the ribalds had, then, much to do with such fellows as these on his hands, especially when the king's army was in the field; he rendered an expeditious justice, and presided sometimes at executions, in order to give them a more solemn character and to inspire more terror in his detestable subjects. But his royalty diminished in importance as the importance of the tribunal of marshals continued to grow; for the king of the ribalds, being attached personally to the king's house, he no longer took part in the campaigns when the king took the field in person. Everywhere, moreover, in the military expeditions, in the camps and in the garrisons, cognizance and judgment of all crimes and misdemeanors belonged by right to the provosts of the marshals, who usurped little by little the authority of the king of the ribalds. This officer was even supplanted by the grand provost of the marshals, in the *ost* or *chevauchée du roi*, towards the end of the fourteenth century; which caused Jean Boutillier to say that the king of the ribalds was charged with the execution of judgments which had been rendered by the provosts of the marshals. “And if it happens,” he adds, “that there is any forfeiture as a result of a criminal execution, the provost by his right has the gold, silver, and girdle of the malefactor, while the marshals have the horse, the harness and all the other implements, whatever they may be, except the cloth and the habits, of whatever sort they may be, with which they are clad, which go to the king of the ribalds who looks to the execution.” At the epoch when Boutillier edited his *Somme Rurale*, the king of the ribalds was no more than a shadow by comparison with what he had been; even his title lent itself to a lack of respect, and the revenues of his office were no longer a source of honor. “The king of the ribalds,” adds Boutellier, “has in his right, because of his office, cognizance in all games of dice, gambling and others which take place *en ost et chevauchée du roy*. Item, over

all the lodgings of the *bourdeaux* and the *bourdellieres*, from which he is to have two sols a week." This is not all: The power of the king of the ribalds of the king's house was circumscribed in jurisdiction, since beyond this jurisdiction, each in his own place, there were many other *rois des ribauds*, each assigned to the policing of manners and named by the lords or by the cities, or even by the ignoble subjects of their sorry royalty. Wherever ribaldry (*ribaudie*) existed, there was naturally a king of the ribalds. This description of *king* belonged customarily to the chief or elected head of a corporation, notably to those who ruled a number of distinct communities, or who united under their scepter a large number of individuals of various professions. Thus there were no kings among the furriers, the grocers, the bakers, and the other trades, who merely elected sworn masters, for the reason that they included only organizations of the same order and trades of the same nature; but there was a *king of the jugglers*, a *king of the fiddlers*, a *king of the archers*, and finally, a *king of the ribalds*. The realm of jugglers or poets, assembled in a single corporation, the most varied talents: the *royal* and *aged* poets, the fiddlers, who succeeded the jugglers, or who had engulfed them in the statutes of a great confraternity, and who included not only musicians and poets but also mountebanks, dancers and mimes. As to the archers, they were recruited indifferently from all classes of the State, and had a king, chosen by lot or one who was designated as the most adroit with the cross-bow. The ribalds, composed of individuals of all sorts, represented a throng of indecent trades, such as the daughters of joy, the courtiers of Prostitution, debauchees, gamblers, gamesters, beggars, vagabonds and others of the same quality; the ribalds, in a word, were quite worthy of having a king of their own. The royal king of the ribalds assured the exercise, at least on certain occasions, over the community of *rois de la ribaudie*.

Claude Fauchet, in the first book of his *Dignités et Magistrats de la France*, gives us an idea that is exact enough of the duties



of the king of the ribalds in the interior of the king's house: "He who is called king of the ribalds does not enjoy the estate of the grand provost of the house, as others have thought; he is the one who has charge of putting out of the king's house those who have no business to eat or sleep there; for in past times, those who had been given viands (which is what was later meant by saying *avoir bouche en cour*), after the clock had sounded, found themselves in the *tinnel*, or common dining hall, and the others were constrained to void the house; and the door having been closed, the keys were placed upon the table of the grand master, for the reason that it was forbidden those who did not have wives, to sleep in the house of the king; and so, to see if any strangers were hidden in the house, or if any lassies (*garces*) had been brought in, the king of the ribalds with a torch in his hand would go into all corners and secret places in the house to seek these strangers, either robbers, or others of said quality." Fauchet, who was almost a contemporary of the last king of the ribalds, pictures him in the exercise of his functions as he had seen him at the court of Louis XII; but Fauchet does not envisage this officer under all his phases, and he does not show him to us in all the epochs of his grandeur and his decadence.

Étienne Pasquier has extracted the following article from a memorial of the Chamber of Accounts, under the date 1285: "Item, the king of the ribalds has six deniers in wages, and a provision, and a hired valet, and sixty sols for his wardrobe the year." Since, prior to the above article, the two *portiers en parlement*, *quan le roy n'y est* were appointed each at two sols *pour toute chose*, it is concluded from this comparison that the king of the ribalds, possessing but six deniers in wages, occupied a rank inferior to that of porter; but there is perhaps an error in this extract, for the king of the ribalds, besides his six deniers in wages and his *provend*, (or provision of oats for his horse) has sixty sols *pour robbe* the year, which does not permit us to doubt that his wages of six deniers were daily and in addition to the revenues of his office. In an account of the King's

house, under date 1312, his *valet à gages* is called his provost (*prévot*): *Praepositus regis ribaldorum, qui duxit IV valletos qui vulnaverant, etc.* This provost commanded evidently a troop of archers or of sergeants, since we see him conducting to prison four valets accused of having wounded a man. In another account of the household of Phillip the Long, in 1317, we see once more the king of the ribalds in the character of supreme chief of the palace police; after an enumeration of the *huissiers de salle*, the *portiers*, and the *valets de porte*, with their wages, provender and profits, we read this article: "Item, Crasse Joë, king of the ribalds, shall not eat at court and shall not come into the dining hall, if he is not sent for; but he shall have six deniers of bread and two quarts of wine, a piece of flesh and a chicken, and a provender of oats, and thirteen deniers in wages, and shall be mounted by the stable, and shall keep himself always outside the gate, and shall see to it that none enter there who have not a right to enter." Another article of the same *Compte* shows us the king of the ribalds at exercise during the dinner hour, and this article conforms sufficiently with the idea that Fauchet gives us of the duties of this officer in the interior of the king's house: "Item, it shall be the duty of the ushers of the dining hall (*huissiers de salle*), as soon as they hear the cry, *Aux Queux!* to see that the hall is emptied of everyone except those who are to eat, and they shall give all others to the ushers of the dining hall, and the ushers shall give them to the varlets of the door, and the varlets of the door shall give them to the porters, and the porters shall keep the court clear, and shall give them to the king of the ribalds and the king of the ribalds shall see that no one else enters the door, and he who is found in default shall be punished by the master of the house who is in service for the day." Thus, under the reign of Phillip the Long, the king of the ribalds found himself already shorn of his ancient privileges, to the point of no longer possessing the *bouche en cour*, and of being subordinated to the masters of the king's household. This preeminence of the masters of the household

was particularly evidenced in a decree of Parliament of the 16th of March, 1404, which apprises us that "the valets of the king of the ribalds shall not bear rods, as do the ushers of the dining hall and the porters of the king's house; and the masters of the king's house shall have jurisdiction over the said valets of the king of the ribalds." The progressive decadence of the office of king of the ribalds is still better evidenced by the diminution of his wages: an Account of the king's household fixes them at 20 sous in 1324; they are not more than 5 sous a day in 1350, according to an ordinance of Phillip of Valois; in 1386, an ordinance of Charles VI decrees: "The king of the ribalds, 4 Parisian sols a day, when he shall be at court, for everything."

This office of the crown, despite its decadence, kept a certain prominence until it was wholly suppressed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Dutillet says "that it has been long filled by gentlemen of good houses and great service, the authority of whom contented the families of princes, lords, and others following the court of the king, by living well and paying their dependents." History, however, makes mention of the king of the ribalds who was degraded and put in the pillory along with his provost, probably for a failure in the duties of his office. An Account of the household of the Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, son of Charles V, in 1388, records in the following terms this remarkable fact: "Jean Guerin, king of the ribalds, for the expenses of him and three others, going from Corbeil to Sedane, (Sedan) to take Guillet, former king of the ribalds, and Picardiau, his provost, to place them in the pillory there." We may suppose that the king of the ribalds who was placed in the pillory in this manner had not been in charge of the King's household, but rather that he had held office in some city dependent upon the jurisdiction of the royal king of the ribalds. This latter had the right of execution and of escheat over certain ones who were given to him after judgment by the ordinary tribunals of the king's household, according to a mention made in the records of the Chamble des Comptes, in the year 1330: "The *gens des requestes* of the

palace imposed perpetual silence on two women who caparisoned themselves contrary to a decree of the Chamber, on pain of being given over to the king of the ribalds and of being punished as infamous." In an Account of the King's household in 1396, sixty-eight Parisian sous are paid by the hand of the king of the ribalds to the executioner who had hung a malefactor named Jean Boulart, and who had interred alive a woman named Pernette la Basmette for the theft of a court vessel from the chateau de Compagne. A king of the ribalds had much to do in the king's house, when he desired conscientiously the requirements of his office; he undoubtedly did not assist personally in the executions which were confided to him, and his provost ordinarily took his place in such disagreeable commissions, but he himself paid the executioner, and he was responsible for the *besogne* which his valets left to other hands. These latter, the same as their master, wore *jackets with the sign of the sword* (*hoquetons a l'enseigne de l'épée*), as Dutillet says, in order to recall the fact that the king of the ribalds had formerly inflicted criminal justice in the household of the king.

This personage had to be a tried servant of royalty, a faithful and incorruptible defender of the person of the king, since the guarding of the gates and the interior policing of the palace during meals and after the curfew were especially delegated to him. Thus, we are not surprised to see a king of the ribalds named Coquelet suddenly dying of emotion at the coronation of Charles VI in 1380. The one looked upon as the last titular incumbent of this office, Jean Talleran, lord of Grignaux, gives proof of his devotion to the crown by advising the young Duke of Angoulême, who as he saw was greatly taken with Mary of England, not to run the risk of giving a direct heir to the old King, Louis XII; we have here, so to speak, the last will and testament of this strange royalty, which expires with this bit of political foresight, in the presence of which the young Prince, who happened to be Francis I, felt a chill come over his amorous emotions. The king of the ribalds did not step out of his official capacity too far when he ad-



vised in this manner his future sovereign, for he was not a stranger to questions of adultery; and according to some scholars, he demanded five sous in gold of every married woman who had relations with a man other than her husband. But it is probable that the royal king of the ribalds did not participate in the local privileges of the local kings of ribaldry. We should have difficulty in applying to him, for example, what is said about this fine of five sous by the anonymous author of the *Histoire des Inaugurations* (Bevy): "If she refused to pay, he had the right to seize her chair (*selle*)," that is to say, probably, her *chaire*, or the seat of honor which she commonly occupied. That the bordelières who followed the court paid a tax is a circumstance by no means contrary to the usages and customs of feudal law, according to which each tributary was bound to contribute to the revenues of his lord. The weekly revenue from the vassals of the king of the ribalds must have been two sous in gold, if we are to believe Boutillier and Ragueau. Jean le Ferron, who represents this officer as guarding the chamber of the king, still does not hesitate to vilify him by alleging that he lodged in his house and supported public women at the expense of the court. This new allegation, as to the enrichment of the royal king of the ribalds, does not impress us as being so lacking in verisimilitude, when we see suddenly established on the ruins of this office that of *dame des filles de joie suivant la cour* (lady of the daughters of joy following the court), an analogous office which was in full sway during the major part of the sixteenth century. Finally, Dutillet adds to the duties which the *filles de cour* owed the king of the ribalds the fact that they were obliged to *make his bed* throughout the month of May.

The royalty of the ribalds having fallen before the distaff, after the death of the *good* Seigneur de Grignaux, "it was a lady, and a great lady sometimes," according to M. Rabutaux, "who remained charged with the policing of the women of the court." In 1535, her name was Olive Sainte, and she received from Francis I a gift of 90 pounds "to aid her and her said daughters to

live and support the expenses which fall to them ordinarily in following the court.” (See the *Glossaire* of Ducange and Carpentier, on the word *MERETRICALIS vestis*.) A number of ordinances of the same sort, enacted between the years 1539 and 1546, have been preserved; and these ordinances indicate that each year, in the month of May, all the *filles* following the court were granted the honor of presenting to the king the bouquet of *spring* or of *St. Valentine*, which announced the return of spring-time and of the pleasures of love. On the 30th of June, 1540, Francis I orders Jean de Val, his treasurer, to “pay to Cécile de Viefville, lady of the daughters of joy following the court, the sum of 45 pounds in the money of Tours, making the value of 20 crowns in gold, at the rate of 45 sols the piece: of which he makes her a gift, for herself as well as for the other women and girls of her vocation, to share among themselves as they shall see fit, and this by right of the month of May last past, as it has been the custom to do from all antiquity.” We are not, however, of the opinion of M. Rabutaux, who confounds Cécile de Viefville with a duchess of the ancient house of Vieuville, which had no marquises until the time of Henri III, and no dukes till Louis XIV. M. Champollion-Figeac, in publishing this remarkable ordinance in his *Mélanges Historiques* (Volume IV, page 479), has failed to see the noble wife of a duke and peer of the realm in the collateral heir of the royal king of the ribalds! This shameful office still existed in 1558, since Gouye de Longuemare has discovered an ordinance of Henri II, under date of July 13th of the same year, which is intended to reform the abuse of the institution: “It is very expressly enjoined and recommended to all daughters of joy and others, not being under the rule of the said lady of the same daughters, to void the court of their incontinent presence after the publication (of this ordinance), while those under the rule of the said lady are forbidden to go to the villages, and the *chartiers*, muleteers, and others are forbidden to convey, receive or lodge them, as well as to swear or to blaspheme the name of God, under pain of the lash; and by the same means,

the said daughters of joy are bidden to obey and follow the said lady, as is their custom, being enjoined not to injure her, under pain of the lash." Such was the last transformation of the office of king of the ribalds at the French court.

As to the other *rois des ribauds*, who derived certainly from the one of the royal household, we find them everywhere in the history of the cities as well as in the history of the princely houses. There was thus, at the court of Burgundy, a king of the ribalds whose functions were patterned after those of his confrere of the court of France. Colinboule was in charge under the Duke Phillip the Good, and the name does not indicate a person of high distinction. In 1423, it is true, the title of *king of the ribalds* had lost much of its éclat, and the curé of Notre-Dame d'Abbeville could not have been greatly flattered at hearing himself described as *king of the ribalds*, since it was jugglers, so-called ribaudes, paid him homage and revenues for their theatrical performances. It is to be understood that this description was not calculated to inspire respect in one familiar with the excesses of the ribalds, whom their king could only govern by main force. This officer had been, in the beginning, well looked upon, and a good deal more powerful, for ribaldry had not yet left on him the imprint of its name. In a charter of Henry II, king of England and Duke of Normandy, who reigned in 1154 (see Ducange on the word PANAGATOR), there is question evidently of the office of king of the ribalds; and the sergeant of the King, who fills this office, Balderic, son of Gillebert, honored with the good graces of his master, and made grand provost of marshals in the province of Normandy, is called: "guardian of the public women who prostitute themselves in the *lupanar* of Rouen (*custus meretricum publice venalium in lupanar de Roth*)."

In the cities of the provinces, the king of the ribalds was sometimes judge, sometimes the executioner of criminal justice in the matter of ribaldry (*ribauderie*). An ancient record of the Hôtel de Ville of Bordeaux indicates that everything condemned was

“given to the king of the ribalds, to cause him to run through the town, with good rods and good *glèbes*.” Metz also had its king of the ribalds, who was not a very elevated personage. The king of the ribalds of the city of Laon did not always live on good terms with the bailiff of Vermandois: in 1270, his provost, named Poincard (Poincardus, *praepositus ribaldorum*), was accused before the tribunal of the bailiff of having, in complicity with certain persons named Jean le Croseton and Wiet Lipois, committed acts of violence against the Abbey of Saint-Martin de Laon and its abbot (see the *Olim*, published by Count Beugnot, Volume I, page 813). This affair undoubtedly led to the suppression of the office of king of the ribalds at Laon; for Phillip III, in an ordinance of 1283, orders the bailiff of Vermandois not to suffer this office to exist, under any pretext, either publicly or secretly (*quod, clam vel palam vel sub aliquo simulato colore, non permittat regem ribaldorum in villa Laudunensi*). This official prohibition of the office did not extend to all localities; for in 1483, the city of Saint-Amand had a “king of amorous women (*roi des filles amoureuses*)” named Jacob de Godunesme. The executioner of Toulouse took the title of king of the ribalds as though still more to discredit this impoverished royalty.\* Finally, the *Coutume de Cambrae* defines, without reticence, the privileges of the king of the ribalds: “The said king shall have, take and receive from each woman who couples herself carnally with a man for money, provided she owns or rents a house in the city, five Parisian sols for each time. Item, from all the women who come to the city, and who come under the ordinance for the first time, two sols in the money of Tours. Item, from each

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\*See Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, the Second Day, story entitled “The Prisoner” in my translation (Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926): “When morning had passed the great bell of the Commune, tolling slowly, slow, gave the signal for the justice that was to be done; and when the ecclesiastical standards had been brought out, and the sentence of condemnation had been read, which lasted till evening, the malefactor with the most resounding voice came down the way, with a rope about his neck and a tinsel crown upon his head, signifying that he was the King of the Ribaldries.” Etc. This would seem to indicate that a condemned prisoner was the king of the ribalds in this case. (My translation, page 92.)



woman, under the said ordinance who changes her dwelling, or who goes out of the city and remains a night, twelve deniers each time that the case occurs. Item, he shall have a table to himself in one of the fiefs of the palace, or in such place as the bailiff shall please to ordain."

These articles of the *Coutume de Cambrae* make us acquainted in a precise manner with the revenues which the king of the ribalds of that city demanded, not only from the public women who dwelt there, but even from those who merely passed through his dominions. This revenue, and all those of the same sort, were not always collected without difficulty, and the agents of the king of the ribalds sometimes met with terrific opposition. It is thus that a certain Antoine de Sagiag, who called himself a commissary of the king of the ribalds of Mâcon and *suppôt* of the order of *goliardes* or *buffoons* of that city, is to be found perishing in a brawl, in 1380, in the village of Beaujeu, where he had endeavored to collect a fine of five sous from a married woman whom he had accused of adultery. Pierre Talon (*Calcis*), husband of this woman, who was named Colette (*Cola*), and his brother, Étienne, intervened to defend their wife and sister-in-law. Antoine de Sagiag was a ribaud of the worst species, who haunted the cabarets and who lived at the expense of the poor wretches from whom he levied contributions under pretext of *ribaudie*, of *goliardie* and of *bouffonie*, by threatening them with prison. He displayed poor judgment this time, and Colette, strong in her innocence, insisted that she had not slept with a man other than her husband. The latter offered himself as a guarantor of her innocence, and when the ribaud wanted to seize the pretended adulteress and take her to Macôn, Pierre Talon and his brother assassinated him upon the spot. The bailiff of Macôn prosecuted the case against the murderers and Colette, who had been the cause of the murder; but the inquest revealed the fact that the dead man had wrongly accused Colette of having abandoned herself to a man other than her husband (*contra veritatem imponens quod ipsa cum alio quam viro occubuerat*) and that this ribaud

(*se gerens pro ribaldo et se dicens de ordine seu de statu goliardorum seu buffonum*) was in the habit of leading the most scandalous life in the taverns and bad houses, abusing the simplicity of the most respectable women, whom he taxed in the name of king of the ribalds. Letters of remission were solicited and obtained in favor of the defendants, who were not further inconvenienced concerning the death of Antoine de Sagiag; but in these letters, which justified Colette, it was not stated in a formal manner that the king of the ribalds of Macôn did not possess the right to collect a fine of five sous from every married woman convicted of adultery (*super qualibet muliere uxorata adulterante, sibi competere et posse exigere quinque solidos et pro eisdem dictam talem mulierem de suo tripede pignorare*). The King of France appeared, on the other hand, to recognize implicitly this ancient revenue of Prostitution (*de talique et alio vili quaestu*), which the ribalds of Macôn had arrogated to themselves.



## CHAPTER IX

**L**OUIS IX had evidenced his candor and wisdom in endeavoring to suppress Prostitution in the realm of France. The ordinance of 1254, in which he decreed the general banishment of women of an evil life, was never put into rigorous execution, for the reason that it could not be. In order to escape the severe prescriptions of the law, these wretched women merely practiced their despicable trade in secret and assumed all sorts of masks in order to avoid recognition; they had recourse to all manner of ruses in order not to be taken in the act. Undoubtedly, their number diminished considerably, and debauchees encountered more obstacles in satisfying their shameful passions; but Prostitution nevertheless continued to carry on in the shadows its hideous labors, and it almost always succeeded in eluding the watch set by the bailiffs, provosts and judges. It no longer, it is true, reigned in public places of debauchery at certain hours and under certain police rules; it was now everywhere hidden, since it no longer had the law on its side, and it existed with decent and even respectable appearances in the center of cities and in individual houses, in place of being relegated to deserted quarters and infamous clapiers.\* These creatures who were obstinate in disobeying the King's ordinance were the most vicious, the most corrupt and the most incorrigible of all. The necessity of dissimulating their depravations, obliged them, so to speak, to become still more perverted by putting on the armor of hypocrisy and falsehood; they could no longer avoid suspicion except by affecting an honorable exterior and adorning themselves with a feigned virtue; and so they frequented the churches and were careful not to appear in the streets except with veils and with rosaries in their hands. A few, deprived

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\*An argument for the "segregated district."



of their impure industry, entered religious communities under pretext of penitence, and these did not contribute to the amelioration of convent manners.

But it soon became evident that legal Prostitution carried with it fewer inconveniences than that which was occult and illicit. The conviction grew also that it could never be wiped out and that to oblige it to assume all sorts of names and disguises was merely to lend it a new and provocative strength. The professional libertines always knew where to find the means of indulging their scandalous habits; they knew the retreats of their accomplices and they went to those retreats with impunity at all hours. They were not lacking, either, in a special tact, which enabled them to distinguish among a thousand a woman who was in the habit of making a traffic of her body; but sometimes they pretended to make a mistake and would address themselves to women of honor, who would flee with indignation at being the object of such insults. Young novices abused still more naïvely the condition of women whom they met without escorts and whom they would pursue with indecent remarks. "It was then," says Delamare, in his *Traité de la Police*, "and for this reason that a change occurred for the first time in this point of discipline. These unfortunate victims of impurity came to be treated with a certain toleration; but, at the same time, care was taken to distinguish them in public and, as it were, to point them out with the finger of scorn. Certain streets and places were designated as their dwellings, and the costumes which they were to wear and the hours which they were to keep were likewise designated." This passage from the *Traité de la Police* is very remarkable in that it fixes a date for this establishment for a police of manners, since this date is not established by any contemporary witness, or by any royal or municipal ordinance; but the savant Delamare might have searched the ancient monuments of our jurisprudence, the records of Parliament, those of Châtelet and those of the provosts of Paris, and he would not have come upon a single fact of this nature, if he had not had the proof

under his eyes: it came probably from the statutes of the Corporation of *femmes folles de leur corps*, statutes which Sauval cites positively, and which were published at the period when every trade was careful in preserving its ancient privileges, being registered in the archives of the provost of Paris. We have, indeed, the ordinance of 1256 (not of 1254, as Delamare says), which reestablished the legal practice of Prostitution; but in this ordinance there is no question of streets and places assigned for the dwellings of public women, nor any prescription as to their habits, their liveries or their hours. Nevertheless, since it appears from subsequent ordinances that these various police details had been arranged with much precaution, it is altogether natural to attribute to St. Louis, or rather to Étienne Boileau, this régime, connected with that of the trades of Paris. Étienne Boileau was not named guard of the provost until 1258; but he enjoyed long before the esteem of the King, who frequently sought his advice, and who, having selected him to reorganize the provost's office, frequently came to sit at his side when Boileau was dispensing justice at the chatelet. "It was this wise provost of Paris,"\* says Delamare, "who organized all the merchants and all the artisans into different bodies or communities under the title of *confrairies*, according to the commerce or the works which distinguished them; it was he who gave to these merchants their first disciplinary statutes. "Is it not then, quite simple to understand the position of public women in this vast organization of trade, in which the legislator had applied himself to protecting the rights of each and to defining clearly the professions according to their traditional customs?"

Louis IX consented then, to modify his ordinance of 1254; by adding to it a few words which did not change it greatly at the first glance of the eye, he gave it a sense contrary to the one it had previously possessed; this was a roundabout manner of tolerating Prostitution.† Following is the article which renders

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Evidently a forerunner of Herbert Hoover.

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) From which it is evident that Louis IX. was more amenable to reason than are our modern Comstocks.

null and void that of the ordinance of 1254: "Item, that all foolish women and all common ribaudes shall be driven out of all our good towns and cities; especially, that they shall be driven out of our streets in the said good cities and placed beyond the walls and far from the holy saints, as well as the churches and cemeteries; and whoever shall rent any house whatsoever in any of the said good towns and cities to common and foolish women, or who shall receive them into his house, he shall render and pay to our establishments the rent of the house for a year." It is by virtue of this ordinance, dated from Paris, that legal Prostitution, which had disappeared for only two years, resumes its regular existence under the protection of the officers of the king; and all the ordinances which come after and which refer to Prostitution are founded upon this one of St. Louis, who had, if not created, at least reformed the police of manners. The articles in the ordinance of 1256 preceding the one we have cited are not wholly alien to our subject, since they classify with the debauchees the gamblers at dice and the blasphemers, by assimilating Prostitution to dice-playing and blasphemy. The holy King, then, forbids his seneschals, bailiffs and other *officiaux et servicials*, of whatever state or condition they may be, to utter any word which may turn to the contempt of God, of the Virgin or of the Holy of Holies. "And they shall guard themselves," the ordinance adds, "from play at dice, from the *bordeaux* and from the taverns." He forbids later the *forge des dez* throughout his realm, and orders that every man who shall have been found playing at dice, *commonly or by common report, or frequenting a tavern or a bordel*, shall be reputed infamous and shall not be permitted to testify in justice. These articles of the law prove that, under this reign, the taverns were not possessed of any better fame than the *bordeaux*; and we may form an idea from this of the sort of men and women who assembled in these dens of debauchery, which no one could enter without dishonor.

There is a souvenir of the Roman law in the fact that the jurisconsults had begun to study and to view with reprobation the taverns (*tabernae*), where one went to drink, to eat, to sleep and to gamble.\* However, at the very moment when an ordinance of the King was declaring infamous whoever should have been convicted of frequenting these bad places, the provost of Paris was publishing the statutes of the tavern keepers (*taverniers*) in which, it is true, he concerned himself only with the sale of wine at auction; but anyone who came along might be a tavern keeper, provided he had the wherewithal (*de quoi*), and providing he paid the proper revenues to the king and to the city; the corporation, which was thus composed of all sorts of persons, could not pretend to the esteem of respectable folk. These taverns were merely held to giving wine *in loyal measure* (*à loial mesure*);† they might, otherwise, mingle in the most indecent commerce by opening their doors to ribaudes and to ribauds, who would pass the day in drunkenness, playing at dice, blaspheming and committing all the most culpable actions. During the short interval of time in which Prostitution had been constrained to hide itself, the taverns replaced the bordeaux, and the latter became taverns,‡ when they were reestablished by an ordinance of the King himself who had closed them before taking account of their utility. Delamare assumes that it was during the interregnum of legal Prostitution that public women in our language began to be described by “particular and odious names which designated the ignominy of their debauchery.” He appears to believe that these names had been invented expressly with the object of inspiring horror and contempt with respect to creatures who merited these insulting descriptions: “They undoubtedly had in view, by making them thus recognizable, the hope that modesty, which is so natural to their sex,

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\*Cf. Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, Third Day (“The Best Profession”): “On the day when a landlord opens a tavern without putting up a sign, it is understood that one goes there to eat, to gamble, to bawdy, to curse and to deceive, and that he goes away to say his prayers and to fast.” Etc.

†Cf. our bureau of weights and measures.

‡As our taverns (saloons) became coffee shops under Prohibition.



would come to the aid of the law, and that men would be ashamed to be received in places and by creatures branded with so great infamy.”

We are reduced to conjectures on the subject of the organization of public women by Louis IX, or at least under the reign of this holy King; but is indubitable that this organization existed and that it was perpetuated under the following reigns, without being modified in any radical manner; for it is always the ordinances of the holy Louis which are invoked by his successors in the regulation of legal Prostitution. We shall endeavor, in another chapter to discover what were the streets of Paris which at this time were known as *bourdelières*. We have not found any historical text which proves that the women of evil life were from thereafter distinguished from respectable women, either by a mark of infamy like that of the Jews, or by vestments of a certain characteristic color. There is, however, ground enough for believing that Louis IX, who had desired that the Jews should not be confounded with the Christians took the same precautions with regard to Prostitutes and obliged them to bear an analogous mark. It was in 1269 that the Jews, whose sojourn was not tolerated in France except under conditions as onerous as they were dishonorable, were obliged, under pain of prison and arbitrary fine, to sew upon their robe in the front and back “a piece of felt or yellow cloth of a palm in diameter and four in circumference,” which was called *rouelle* in French and *rota* or *rotella* in Latin.\* Afterwards, this *rouelle* came to lose gradually its form and its dimensions; it became triangular and

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\*This mark of the Jew existed elsewhere than in France. See Aretino's *La Cortigiana*, Act IV, dialogue between Rosso and Romanello, the Jew:

Rosso. The last reason is, so you will not have to wear the red sign on your breast.

Jew. What difference does that make?

Rosso. It makes this difference, that the Spaniards would like to crucify you for that sign.

Jew. Why crucify me?

Rosso. Because it makes you look like one of them.

Jew. There's a difference between them and us.

Rosso. There is no difference if you wear that. And then, if you don't have the sign of a Jew, the urchins won't pelt you with orange peel and melons. And so, become a Christian. . . .”

was called *billette*; when it came to be wholly suppressed, it was no longer any larger than a crown; but the Jews paid great sums into the treasury of Phillip the Long in order to be delivered from this mark of infamy, which the poor ones among them alone kept down to the reign of King John, who reestablished the *rouelle*, half of red and half of white, of the size of the royal seal. Is it not to be presumed that the daughters of joy were likewise constrained to bear a brand of the same sort? We shall prove that this brand was in use in a number of provinces in France. We shall, with still more probability, advance the theory that, from that day, the sumptuary ordinances had forbidden dissolute women certain stuffs, certain furs, certain jewels. The first known ordinance in which there is question of the regulation of this sort, dates from the year 1360 and is to be found in the *Livre Vert Ancien du Châtelet*, containing the acts of the provost of Paris. In this ordinance, which is undoubtedly but the confirmation of one still more ancient, the provost of Paris forbids "to girls and women of evil life, and making sin of their bodies, to have the boldness to wear upon their robes and hoods any embroideries, boutonnières of silver, white or gilded, any pearls, or any mantles furred in gray, under pain of confiscation." It orders them to abandon these ornaments within a period of eight days, after which all the sergeants of the châtelet who discovered any violations shall arrest the guilty parties, except in the places devoted to the service of God, and shall despoil them of the said articles, demanding five Parisian sous from each violator.

The provost of Paris, Etienne Boileau, carrying out the virtuous intentions of St. Louis, undoubtedly took upon himself the task of repressing all the excesses of Prostitution in the capital of the realm. His *Livre des Métiers*, in which he is principally concerned with the industrial constitution of each body of the State, does not afford us, it is true, any passage in which he poses as a reformer of manners; but since the statutes of the corporations of art and trades date back to this epoch, although

they were not confirmed by the kings of France until dates much later, we see in the statutes and privileges, edited by the old and wise of each industry, that the policing of manners had been given the attention of the provost of Paris, who first of all accorded his official sanction to this law which the kings later approved and recognized by letters patent. In the statutes of the barbers, confirmed in 1371, masters of the trade are forbidden to keep women of an evil life in their houses or to favor the infamous commerce of these unfortunate ones, under pain of being deprived of their offices, and of losing at the same time, their implements (*outils*): chairs, basins, razors, and *other things belonging to the said trade*, which were to be sold for the profit of the king and the strongbox (*boite*) of the community. The barbers, who were frequently at the same time bathhouse keepers and rubbers, did not always observe this prohibition, and the benefits they derived from Prostitution and *maquerelage* encouraged them to brave the pecuniary penalties, which it was necessary to renew incessantly in the form of new ordinances. In the statutes of the butchers of Paris, confirmed in 1381, the apprentices of the trade are forbidden to marry a woman who had been or still was a *fille publique*: "Item, if anyone takes a woman commonly defamed, without leave of the master and the judges, he shall be deprived of the *Grant Boucherie* forever, and shall not be permitted to carve, either for himself or for another, without losing his meats; that he shall carve in one of the stalls of the Petit-Pont till the master or the judges shall bail him. Finally, according to the statutes of the seamstresses, women defamed by their evil manners, could not be received into the corporation, and those of the sort who had succeeded in being admitted by fraud or otherwise, were to be expelled, following an inquiry; to mark their ignominious expulsion, Sauval (Volume II, page 147) says that the merchandise which these impure ones had touched was tossed into the street.

All the efforts of St. Louis and his ministers to impose upon Prostitution a salutary bridle, do not appear to have had the

success which had been expected of them for the pious King, at the end of his life, repented of having permitted vice a restrained career under the protection of the laws, and he returned to his first project, that of entirely effacing in his States, the defilement of evil manners. When he was preparing to embark on the second Crusade, in the course of which he died, the horror he had of impurity inspired him to put into execution this great project of reform. The 25th of June, 1269, he wrote from Aigues-Mortes to Mathieu, Abbot of Saint-Denis and to the Count Simon de Nesle: "We have ordered, moreover, the destruction at once of notable and manifest Prostitutions (*notoria et manifesta prostitula*) which defile with their infamy our faithful people, and which draw so many victims into the gulf of perdition. We have ordered that these scandals be pursued in the cities, as well as in the country, and that our realm be absolutely purged (*terram nostram plenius expurgari*) of all debauched men and all public malefactors (*flagitiosis hominibus ac malefactoribus publicis*)."

This letter contains a positive order, the execution of which the death of the King did not permit. Despicable women and their contemptible cortége continued to practice their trade by virtue of preceding ordinances, and the virtuous designs of Louis IX were not carried out, who would have run aground once more in his plan of purifying public manners. We may suppose, however, that he handed down to his sons the desire of attempting this reform, which he had never had the time to execute, for he seems to make allusion to them in the *Enseignements* written with his own hand, which he left on his deathbed to Phillip, his elder son and his successor: "Keep yourself from doing anything which is displeasing to God," he says in this moral testament, "that is to say, from any mortal sin. . . . Keep the good customs of your realm. . . . Flee and avoid the company of the evil. . . . Love your neighbor and his good, and hate all evils of any sort whatsoever. Let none be so bold in your presence as to utter a word which moves to sin." Phillip the Bold desired to conform to the instructions of his glorious father.



At the Parliament of the Ascension, in 1272, this King enacted a prohibitive ordinance against blasphemy, places of debauchery and games of dice, which St. Louis likewise had confounded in his reprobation. We possess nothing more than the letter addressed to all the bailiffs in order "that they shall see to it in their bailiwicks and in the land that the barons observe the said ordinance by refraining from villainous oaths, common *bordeaux* and games of dice; the pain of silver," said the King, "shall be changed into pain of body, according to the quality of the person and the quantity of the misdeed." The loss of the ordinance which this letter advertises is evidenced, it seems to us, from the fact that that ordinance was never executed, and that it was forgotten perhaps before Phillip the Handsome had succeeded Phillip the Bold. This general extermination of the *bordeaux* was an impossible and a dangerous thing; that tacit tolerance was to be preferred which had spared them in the past and which had put no obstacle in the path of their multiplication. It is to be believed that, in those times, they limited themselves to subjecting Prostitution to severe police rules, and to assuring thus the safety of good women. We shall assign, then, to the reign of Phillip the Bold two customs which Pasquier reports in his *Recherches de la France*, without assigning them a precise date, merely placing them about the time of St. Louis. It was very likely at this epoch that prostitutes were forbidden to wear gilded girdles, being ordered, on the other hand, not to show themselves in public without an aglet upon the shoulder. This aglet must have varied in color according to the cities in which a *ribaude commune* possessed the right of sojourning and practicing her trade. We shall see, in speaking of the usages and customs of Prostitution in the different cities of France, that the public women of Toulouse, had, in place of the aglet on the shoulder, an *enseigne* or *jarretiere* on the arm, and that this *enseigne* was always of a different color from the robe, in order better to catch the glance and proclaim the vile condition of the person who wore it. "The successors of this wise King

(Louis IX),” says Pasquier, in Chapter XXXV, Book VIII of his work, “did not by their laws and edicts permit *bordeaux*, although they suffered them by a form of connivance; thinking that of two evils it was better to choose the less, and that it was more expedient to tolerate public women than to give occasion to knaves to solicit married women, who should make an express profession of their chastity. True, they desired that these women who in public places abandoned themselves to the first comer should not only be reputed infamous by law, but that they should also be distinct and separate in the matter of habiliments, from the wise matrons (*sages matrones*); which is the reason they were anciently forbidden in France to wear *gilded cinctures* (*ceintures dorées*); and for this same reason, it was anciently desired that such good dames should have some signal upon their person, that they might be distinguished and recognized from the rest of the prudent women (*preudes femmes*); and this signal was the wearing of an aglet upon the shoulders.”

It is with two ancient customs that Pasquier connects two proverbs which were popular in the thirteenth century, and which are not yet so old that they have ceased to be employed in our own century. One said, and one says still, that a woman wears the aglet, and that good renown is better than a gilded cincture. It was, as a matter of fact, under the reigns of Phillip the Bold and Phillip the Handsome, that fashion imported into France from the Orient those leather cinctures, gilded or woven in gold, which the sumptuary ordinances forbade women of low condition and, as a consequence, the *ribaudes*, who, like the meretrices of Rome, were not permitted to wear gold or silver upon their persons; the forbidding of an object of the toilet must have appeared intolerable to the bourgeoisie and trades women, who found themselves thereby, classified with the *folles femmes*; they proceeded to avenge themselves for the prohibitive edict by contrasting their good renown to the luxury of the ladies of the court, who did not always, by any means, lead an irreproachable life. There were frequent infractions of the sumptuary ordi-

nance, and many women adorned themselves with these gilded cinctures, which they did not have the right to wear. The Provost of Paris did his best by threatening them with fines and confiscations, but they were obstinate in defying the sergeants and in playing the role of ladies with their gilded girdles. The ribaudes were not any the less bold in taking this prohibited ornament on account of the risks of prison or the lash. It will not be necessary for us to refute those writers who, without reason, have held that the gilded cincture was attributed as a distinctive mark to women of evil life, and that respectable women, who did not dare confound themselves with these others by borrowing from them this compromising ornament, consoled themselves haughtily for their deprivation by insisting upon their own good reputation. As to the aglet, it does not figure long on the shoulders of the prostitutes of Paris, although Pasquier saw it with his own eyes toward the end of the sixteenth century, when this custom was practiced at Toulouse by the pensionnaires of the Châtel-Vert. *Courir l'aiguillette* signifying, according to Pasquier, "to prostitute one's body by abandoning it to everyone." It is probable that this phrase at first had been used to designate women who ran about the streets with the aglet (*aiguillette*) upon the shoulder. This picturesque expression was not slow in becoming disfigured, on account of the lack of knowledge of the circumstance to which it owed its birth; the people had corrupted it without being aware of the fact and without changing the primitive sense when they formed the habit of saying *courir le guilledou*. We shall not seek to convict of error certain philologists who had endeavored to show that the ribaudes who ran the aglet addressed themselves especially to the shoulder straps of those whom they accosted, these shoulder straps being attached and held in place by a lace or aglet. These philologists have committed an anachronism in the archaeology of shoulder straps, and they have been led astray by the unfortunate comparison which they have made of two varieties of aglets.

However this may be, under the successors of Saint Louis, Prostitution, however well regulated it may have been, had im-

puently extended its domain; and manners had become so relaxed that the three daughters-in-law of Phillip the Handsome, Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, Jeanne, Countess of Poitiers, and Blanche, Countess of LaMarche, were accused of adultery at one and the same time and immured, by order of the King, in the same prison in the Château-Gaillard. Their trial was held behind closed doors, and nothing of the prodigious excesses attributed to them became published; one of them, Jeanne de Bourgogne, wife of Phillip, Count of Poitiers, was merely transferred to the Château de Dourdan, where her husband went to seek her, with the object of restoring her liberty if not her honor. Marguerite, although less guilty than her sisters, was strangled to death in her prison, and Blanche only left hers to see herself repudiated and led away to the convent of Maubuisson. Public opinion attributed to these three sisters a monstrous complicity of debauchery and crime; it was told of them that they had deliberately taken up their lodging in the *hôtel de Nesle*, situated beyond the walls of Paris on the banks of the Seine, on the present site of the *Institut de France*, and that they were in the habit of attracting to this hotel, which belonged to Jeanne, Countess of Poitiers, the young *écoliers* whom they had picked out from among those who frequented the Pré-aux-Clercs. These scholars, after having satisfied the lubricity of the three Princesses, were poisoned or slain with a dagger and afterward hurled into the river, which formed a watery sepulchre for the sorry victims of the *Tour de Nesle*.\* Two officers of the household of these Princesses, Phillip and Gautier de Laumay, brothers, were convicted at Pontoise in 1314 and condemned to be flayed alive, which was done, and their bodies remained exposed upon the gibbet, like those of vilest criminals. A similarity of names involves for a moment in this accusation the Queen herself; but Jeanne de Navarre, who had never inhabited the *hôtel de Nesle*, found little difficulty in clearing herself with the judges. The impudicity of these daughters-in-law was none the less re-

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\*This may be a variation of the ubiquitous Blue Beard (a feminine Blue Beard) legend.



flected upon her; and an injurious tradition, perpetuated among the people, would make her the bloody heroine of the debauches of the *hôtel de Nesle*. "According to this erroneous tradition," says Robert Gaguin, in his *Compendium* of the history of France, "this Queen had shared her couch with a number of scholars (*aliquot scholasticorum concupitu usam*) and to hide her crime, after having slain them, she hurled herself from the window of her room into the river. A single one of the scholars, Jean Buridan, escaped this ambushade, and it was for this reason that he published this sophism: *Reginam interficere nolite, timere bonum est.*" This celebrated sophism, which may be understood and explained in a number of fashions, is an enigma unworthy of the famous Jean Buridan, whom the University of Paris cites with honor among its professors of philosophy in the fourteenth century. This latter, who was rector of the University in 1320 (see *Bibl. belg.* of Valère André, page 471), would have been but a simple *écolier* six or seven years before. As to the sophism of which he was the author, we believe that we can reestablish its original sense by writing it thus: *Reginam interfodere nolite, timere, bonum est.* We would put in the place of the verb, *interficere*, which has no sense here, *interfodere*, *interferire*, *interferre*, or any other verb possessing an erotic significance, and we would then translate it thus: "Do not sleep with the Queen; it is well to fear this dangerous honor."

The tradition attaching to the tower of Nesle, which has come down from the end of the seventeenth century, was so widespread among the people of Paris that Brantôme makes mention of it in his *Dames Galantes*.

"This Queen," he says, "resided in the *hôtel de Nesle* at Paris and there laid a snare for passers-by, and those who were the most agreeable to her, of whatever sort they might be, she called to and summoned them and, after having taken from them what she would, she caused them to be hurled from the top of the tower into the water below and thus caused them to be drowned. I would not say that this is true, but the vulgar, at least the majority in Paris, affirm it; and it is so common that they repeat it in

pointing out the tower." Before Brantôme, Villon had also recalled this tragic history, by saying, in his *Ballade des dames du temps jadis*:

*Sembablement où est la reine  
Qui commanda que Buridan  
Fût jeté en un sac en Seine!*

But the historical legend has become singularly weakened, and in place of the three libertine Princesses, disputing and sharing the caresses of robust and handsome scholars and finding new ones every night, we see, in the vulgar narrative, only a Queen of France enamoured of Buridan. Let us remark also that this Buridan might have made allusion to his adventure in the tower of Nesle by inventing an allegory which became proverbial and which was called *l'âne de Buridan*; it represented an ass dying of hunger between two bushels of oats, rather than to choose between the two. May not this ass have been Buridan himself between two or three princesses, equally beautiful and equally impatient in their desires for pleasure?

For the rest, if the women, if princesses themselves showed themselves so eager to run after men, it was perhaps because the men appeared to disdain them and had found interests elsewhere. A horrible libertinism had crept into all classes of society since the Crusades, and vice against nature, which the sojourn of the French in Palestine had caused to be acclimated in France, was still threatening, despite the efforts of Knighthood, to infect manners and corrupt the population. We have cited elsewhere a passage from the *Histoire Occidentale* of Jacques de Vitry, which gives us a frightful picture of the perversity of his contemporaries. A French poet of the same epoch, Gautier de Coincy, although prior of the Abbé of Saint-Medard de Soissons, pictures the life of the cloister under colors equally shameful in his *Fabliau de Sainte Leocade*:

*La Grammaire hic à hic accouple;  
 Mais Nature maldit le couple.  
 Le mort perpétuel engendre  
 Cil qui aime masculin genre  
 Plus que le féminin ne face,  
 Et Diex de son livre l'efface,  
 Nature rit, si com moi semble,  
 Quand hic et hoc joignent ensemble.  
 Mais hic et hic, chose est perdue,  
 Nature en est tost esperdue. . . .*

This abominable vice had become so common that legal Prostitution deserved to be encouraged as a remedy or at least as a palliative for such a turpitude. The very existence of society must have appeared to be threatened when Phillip the Handsome, who was lacking in neither resolution nor energy, proposed to arrest the progress of sodomy by striking terrors in those who set the example in this criminal abberation of the senses: this was a principal cause of the trial of the Templars. The attentive perusal of authentic fragments of the records of this trial prove to us that Phillip the Handsome was merely prosecuting, in this religious and military order, sacrilege and debauchery which had been carried to the last degree of scandalous audacity. Whatever opinion one may adopt as to the rule of the Templars and the primitive innocence of the order," says the illustrious historian Michelet, frightened at the imposing evidence which he had brought to life for the first time and which merely confirms our opinion, "it is not difficult to form a judgment as to its later disorders, disorders analogous to those of the religious orders." The publication of original documents proves, in an irrefutable manner, that the order of the Temple had become utterly affected by the most execrable depravation. Phillip the Handsome, in accord with Pope Boniface VIII, had the courage to attack the evil in its seat and to attempt to stifle it under the debris of the order of the Temple, which had propagated it under its white mantle. There is some chronicle which imputes to the

vengeance of a woman the defamatory accusation which was made against the Templars in 1307, and which soon lighted their pyres throughout all Europe. The interrogatory which the grand master and two hundred thirty-one knights or servant-brothers underwent at Paris in the presence of the pontifical commissaries "was conducted gently," says Michelet, "and with much good management by the high ecclesiastical dignitaries, and despite the systematic denials of the accused, it was established that the majority of the charges relating to the indecent manners of the order were but too well justified. The hurried nature of the punishment inflicted on the condemned proves clearly enough the nature of the crime which public rumor for long had attributed to them, before a minute inquiry had brought out the ignominy."

The Templars were universally depraved; and their principal vices, their pride, their avarice, their ambition, their drunkenness and their meanness had passed into a proverb; but if one said, among the people: to drink, to swear, and to play the glutton like a Templar (*boire, jurer, se gorgiaser comme un Templier*); if the satiric poets took pleasure in enumerating these soldier-monks, there was still a general ignorance of the monstrous infamies practiced in the bosom of the order of the Temple, which had become an odious sect devoted to the most ignoble prostitution. After the deposition of the first witnesses who had spontaneously presented themselves to accuse the Templars, a series of questions was drawn up and put separately to each of the accused, and from their responses, more or less evasive, it might be concluded with certitude that, in the ceremony of the reception of brothers, the one who was received and the one who did the receiving kissed each other mutually upon the mouth, upon the navel or the belly, on the anus or the base of the spine, and sometimes on the virile member (*aliquando in virga virili*); that the new member ordinarily was alone submitted to impure kisses of this sort, after having denied Jesus Christ and spat upon the Cross; that his sponsor forbade him to have relations with women, but authorized him to abandon himself with the brothers to the most horrible excesses. A large number of the



Templars, faithful to their mutual oaths, joined in a haughty protest against what they labeled as ridiculous calumnies. A number of them, intimidated or bought over, promptly made circumstantial confessions, while the others contented themselves by declaring that they had never participated in any reprehensible act, even while avowing the obscenities which had characterized their reception by the knights, in accordance with the statutes of the order. Moreover, these statutes were not explained by anyone, and no attempt was even made to justify their strange and mysterious horrors. Huguet de Paris relates that, during the ceremony of his reception, after he had been despoiled of his vestments, excepting his shirt, the brother charged with his reception, after having assisted him in putting on the robe and mantle of the order, lifted up his clothes from the front and from the rear (*frater P. levavit ipsi testi vestes ante et retro*) and kissed him brusquely on the mouth, on the navel and at the bottom of the loins. Mathieu de Tilley says, on the contrary, that the brother who received him, after having made him deny Christ and spit upon the Cross, ordered that he kiss him on the naked flesh and for this purpose uncovered his rump, to which the neophyte applied his lips (*praecepit quod oscularetur eum in carne nuda, et discoperuit se circa femur, et ipse fuit osculatus eum in anca circa illum*). The deposition of Gérard de Causse was not less circumstantial, although it presented an obvious contradiction. Thus, according to him, every knight of the Temple who became guilty of sodomy (*si essent convicti de crimine sodomitico*) was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and the brothers, fearing the temptations of the Devil on this score, were accordingly in the habit of leaving the light burning in their dormitories during the night (*et quod tenerent lumen de nocte in loco in quo jacerent, ne hostis inimicus daret eis occasionem delinquendi*); and yet, when Gérard de Causse had been received as a knight, one of the brothers had told him that, in case he was unable to resist temptations of carnal desire, it would be better for the honor of the Order to sin with his companions than to approach women (*dixit eis quod si haberent calorem et motus carnales, poterant ad invicem car-*

*naliter commisceri, si volebant quia meliuserat quod hoc facerent inter se, ne ordo vituperaretur, quam si accederent ad mulieres*). This Templar did not fail to protest, like the others, that he had never seen this infamous precept put into practice, or known of its being put into practice, by his brothers.

The consequences of this trial were terrible; a throng of Templars perished in the course of the punishments. The order of the Temple, abolished and anathematized, did not, however, disappear all at once, but was perpetuated in the shadows, in the same manners, if we are to credit certain statements which do not possess the value of historic proof. But after having read and compared the fragments of this memorable trial, which show us a sect of sodomites and impious lechers, covered with the religious habits and giving themselves, in the presence of the Altar, to execrable excesses—after this we are forced to seek the causes which led to the corruption of this Order, an Order which had been for long respected by reason of its regular manners and its virtues. These causes are to be found in the long sojourn of the Templars in the Orient, where vice against nature is almost endemic, and where the fear of leprosy, of the *mal des arbents* and various cutaneous or organic affections is always attached to relations with women. The Templars, from fear of becoming lepers and *méseaux*, had defiled body and soul by accepting and approving the most shameful of all Prostitutions.



## CHAPTER X.

WE HAVE very little information as to the history of the bad houses of Paris, and it is with difficulty that we are able to establish in a positive manner their exact situation at certain epochs prior to the sixteenth century. However, from the end of the thirteenth century we find them named in the public acts (*instrumenta*) of the provost's office in the cartularies of parishes and convents, in the court rolls, in the *comptes* of various jurisdictions and even in the old poems. It is, then, permissible for us, with the aid of these authorities, to endeavor to determine, so to speak, the topography of Parisian Prostitution in the middle ages. Unfortunately, in endeavoring to trace with difficulty the *carte routiere* of the infamous streets of the Capital, we are confronted with the impossibility of supplying certain picturesque and curious details which would be very desirable in distracting the reader amid the monotonous dissertations of the antiquarian. These details are absolutely lacking, and if we happen to know what streets and alleys possessed then the sorry character which a number of them have retained to our day, we do not know anything as to the exterior aspect of these places of debauchery, what were their names and signs, at least so far as the majority are concerned, what was their customary interior organization or what was their interior appearance. Everything on this head lies in the domain of the imagination, which finds it necessary to seek in Rabelais and even in Regnier the colors appropriate to a picture *bordeaux* of our ancestors. But, nevertheless, although we have but very vague and very imperfect notions on this mysterious subject, we believe it will be useful and interesting to compile an archaeological inventory of these resorts which we shall see gradually spreading out from the center of the city, and which appear to have been the fiefs of Dame Venus and



her son Cupid, whom France in the Middle Ages still endowed with mythologic reminiscences.

In those times of privilege and tradition, each trade possessed for itself certain quarters and certain streets to which it gave its name; in this street were the *ouvroirs*, the *fenêtres*, the *etaux* of the masters of this trade; there alone they concentrated their industry and their commerce. Prostitution, which reigned as one of these trades, was unable to confine itself to a single quarter or to occupy certain streets running into each other; for it was essentially to its interest to divide its forces and to spread out in all the quarters at once, in order to lay everywhere its nets and to capture as many victims as possible. The police who regulated it were always opposed to this diffusion of debauchery in all parts of the city, and they labored constantly to restrict the impure domain which was conceded to public women. Such is the struggle which we see for a number of centuries on the part of Prostitution which held up its head in turn against the authority of the Archbishop of Paris, that of the provost, that of Parliament, and even that of the king. Its obstinacy and audacity resisted ordinances, decrees and sergeants; it would not yield, except after a long warfare, a domain which it liked and which had been accorded to it by tradition; it came back incessantly, after having been driven out, and it would never entirely abandon the place; it was not hard to please, otherwise, as to the choice of place in which it set up business; it did itself justice in adopting by preference the most sombre, the narrowest, the dirtiest and most infected streets, a habit which it still preserves as though it did not dare to leave its hiding place and as though the air which decent folks breathed were unhealthy for it. Like the Jews, who did not have the right to set foot out of their own domain, and who were shut up at night like lepers in lazar-houses, the *ribaudes* and their infamous following did not go beyond the limits of their own locality under pain of being exposed to lash, to prison or to a fine; but after their legal existence had been regulated by the ordinances of Saint Louis, they no longer had need of hiding themselves in the practice of their obscene profession, providing

they conformed to the prescriptions and the statutes of ribaldry (*la ribaude*).

The most ancient document in which we find a nomenclature of the bad places of Paris is a poem or a monologue in verse composed in the thirteenth century by a certain Guillot, who is not known to us except by his *Dit des Rues de Paris*. This poem was published for the first time in 1754 by the Abbé Lebeuf from a manuscript which he had discovered at Dijon and which he deposited in the library of the Abbé Fleury, Canon of Notre-Dame. Since that time the work of Guillot has been often reprinted, and it has been made use of in particular in fixing the Parisian topography of the thirteenth century; for it is from 1270 that we may date this rhymed catalogue in which the *acteur* speaks of *Dom Sequence, chefecier de Saint-Merry*, as of a contemporary; this latter personage was still living in 1283. Critics, who have cited the *Dit des Rues*—to which Guillot has given the form of an itinerary, commencing with the rue de la Huchette, in quartier de l'Université—have failed to observe that the poet, or rather the rhymer, in accumulating the names of streets and alleys, which he delights in rhyming together in the most naïve manner in the world, would appear to have no other end in view than the designation of places devoted to debauchery. And yet, we would not say that this honest Guillot, who has perhaps seen his name pass into a proverb, with the epithet, *songeur*, had any shameful object in view; but it is, nevertheless, a remarkable fact that, in these three hundred rhymes, the principal digressions of the poet relate to Prostitution; on this score, at least, he relaxes from the aridity of an onomastic catalogue and adds to it complacently a few images which are not in the best taste. Each time Guillot meets with one of those *capliers* which the urban police surrounded with a mysterious tolerance, he has the air of pausing, if only to mark the place, and indicate its existence. Since he designates more than twenty suspected streets in the three great divisions of Paris, included under the denominations of the *Université*, *Cité* and the *Ville*, there is ground for supposing that he was called *Guillot le Songeur* by the *bordelières*, who reproached

him with having mentioned *bordeaux*, which only existed in his imagination.

The first to be recognized in his passage from the Petit-Pont to the quartier de l'Université, is in the rue *de la Plâtrière*, which appears to have been the street later called the rue de Battoir:

*La maint (demeure) une dame loudière.  
Qui maint chapel a fait de feuille.*

The Abbé Lebeuf, undoubtedly moved by modesty, explains the word *loudière* as *faiseuse de couvertures* (a woman who makes coverings); but in the old French tongue, *loudière*, signifying a *covering* itself, was figuratively equivalent to *prostitute*, and there was not otherwise any question of coverings. This *loudière*, whom Guillot was not permitted to describe thus at random, might well, in the leisure permitted her by her vile trade, have occupied herself in making *chapeaux de fleurs* or *de verdure*, which the brothers of the corporations bore in their patron fetes, in the processions and in various solemn rites. We are not far from believing that these *chapels*, the making of which constituted an industry of sufficient importance in Paris, were worn upon the heads of fiacées, of brides and lovers, at the family meals. Guillot does not stop long with the rue de la Plâtrière, whatever may have been the charms of the ladies; he pursues his way, he tells us, by the rue du Paon, which he calls *Puon*:

*Je descendi tout bellement  
Droit à la rue des Cordèles:  
Dame ia: le descrod d'elles  
Ne voudroie avoir nullement.*

This rue des Cordèles is now the rue des Cordelières, which owes its name to the convent of the Grands-Cordelières, destroyed by the Revolution. It is probable that Guillot has replaced *Cordelières* by *Cordèles* for the sake of the rhyme and also by allusion to affairs of the heart which took place in that street. The *dames*

who dwelt there were undoubtedly not of a courteous and facile disposition, since the poet fears nothing so much as having an argument (*descord*) with them. This indicates that in all times women of pleasure have been very prompt in dispute and very ardent in their wrath. Guillot, in order to meet other women of the same species, is obliged to go as far as the rue des Prêtres-Saint-Severin, which he calls the *petite ruelle de Saint-Sevrin*, where

. . . *Mainte meschinete*  
*S'y louent souvent et menu,*  
*Et fond battre le trou velu*  
*Des fesseriaux, que nus ne die.*

We shall not undertake the task of removing the veils which the old language throws about the scandalous trail of the *meschinetes* whom Guillot presents to us with much indulgence. We shall rather follow him into the rue des l'Ospital which has since been named the rue Saint-Jean-de-Latrain, in memory of the Hospitalers of Saint John of Jerusalem, who had a house there. Guillot lands in the middle of a lot of quarreling women, who are insulting and beating one another in the street, despite the proximity of the holy fathers; the text is here less obscure than corrupt:

*Une femme i d'espital (despita),*  
*Une autre femme folement*  
*De sa parole moult vilment. . . .*

Guillot fled, without awaiting the end of the dispute, and he so strongly feared becoming involved in it that to escape he crossed the rue Saint-Syphorien, today the rue des Cholets, where he knew a girl named Marie, who must have been at once an Egyptian (a maker of horoscopes) and a *loudière*;

*La rue de la Chaveterie (à présent rue Chartière)*  
*Trouvay. N'allay pas chez Marie,*  
*En la rue Saint-Syphorien,*  
*Où maignent li logiptien.*



In passing into the rue Saint-Hilaire, which has preserved its name, he remembers that a *dame debonnaire* dwells there, but he does not have the time to make a stop in the house of this lady of good will (*de bonne volonté*), whom he names *Gietedas*, a *soubriquet* in which it would be easy to discover an obscene sense; and now he is in the *clos Bruneau* (*Burniau*) *on l'on a rosti naint bruilau*, he says; but by *Bruliau*, he certainly does not mean to speak of the faggots which were burned there. The *clos Bruneau* was in the center of the schools, and the scholars who, in the time of Rabelais, went there to deposit their ordures, also repaired there to *faire chere-lie* with their *meschines*. Guillot has then reason to say that *on à rôti maint bruliau* in this sombre and infected retreat. We still say, in the same sense, *rotir le balai*. Nearby was the rue des Noyers, where were to be found as many women of an evil life as may be met with in our day in the whole quarter:

*Et puis la rue du Noyer,  
Où plusieurs dames, por louier  
Font souvent battre leurs cartiers.*

Guillot, in the rue du Bon-Puits, which owes its name to a jovial allusion, does not forget to commemorate the high deeds of a godmother, wife of a carpenter, famous for the number of men whom she had sent from her bed to the cemetery, according to an interpretation hazarded in these two verses:

*La maint la femme á un chapuis  
Qui de maint homme a fait ses glais.*

Leduchat, or Lenglet Dufresnoy, in explaining the second verse, sees in it an undoubted erotic figure borrowed from the sound of the bells when tolled for the dead. Guillot, who knew all the good places, as one remarked in the familiar language of the last century, heaved a sigh in crossing the rue des l'École, where dwells *dame Nicole*. This rue des l'École, which has be-

come the rue des Fouarre, on account of the straw or *feurre* which was spread in it to deaden the sound of footsteps, contained the great Schools of the University, and, at the same time, more than one school of prostitution. This is why Guillot remarks with malice:

*En celle rue, ce me semble,  
Vent-on et fain et feurre ensemble.*

Guillot has nothing more to learn in these schools; he makes his escape by the rue Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, and he invokes this Saint, *who keeps us from bad places*. Saint Julien was the protector of travellers; he guaranteed them against missteps and misencounters. Guillot, then, enters safe and sound the Cité and the first street he finds arouses his concupiscence; it is the rue Cocatrix:

*Où l'on boit souvent de bons vins  
Dont maint homs souvent se va rie.*

There was not at this period a single wine shop which was not a place of debauchery. Guillot mentions a *good tavern* in the rue Charoui, which extended then from the cloister of Notre-Dame to the rue des Trois-Canettes. These taverns and their dependencies were probably frequented by the choristers and doctors of the cathedral. Guillot, undoubtedly, does them justice in passing: let us hope for his own sake that he did no more than pass through the ruelle Saint-Croix, "where they frequently lash rumps" (*ou l'on chengle souvent des cois*), and so into the rue Gervais-Laurent, which he calls *Gervese Laurens*,

*Où maintes dames ignorent  
Y mesnent, quis de leur guiterne.*

We do not think that the inhabitants of this ill-famed street were in the habit of attracting innocence with the sound of a guitar (*guiterne*), since we are rather inclined to give the word

*guiterne* a figurative sense, our modesty forbids our going into the possible meaning here. Nor shall we stop longer over a strange meeting which befalls Guillot in the rue des Marmousets then *du Marmouset*, where a certain one addresses to him an infamous proposition:

*Trouvay homme qui m'eut fet  
Une Musecorne belourde.*

In the rue du Chevet-Saint-Landry, Guillot is no longer dealing with any but debauched women, whose profession he defines in a manner that is a little hard to understand:

*Femmes qui vont tout le chevez  
Maignent en la rue de Chevez.*

Guillot dives deeper and deeper into the hereditary domain of Prostitution; he is not in Glatigny, which was called the Valley of Love (*val d'amour*):

*En bout de la rue descent.  
De Glateingni où bonne gent  
Maignent et dames au cors gent  
Qui aux hommes, si con moy semblent,  
Volontiers charnelment assemblent.*

He escapes, it may be, the perils of temptation and plunges into the rue du Haut-Moulin, which was called the rue Saint-Denis de la Chartre, on account of the church which was to be seen in it and which was not destroyed until the time of the Revolution. The bad house which Guillot designates in this street must have been one of the most considerable in Paris, and the women it contained never left this lubricious abbey,

*Où elusieurs dames en grant chartre  
Ont maint v. en leur c . . tenu,  
Comment qu'ilz y soient contenù.*

This passage and many others will tend to prove that the *Dit des Rues* might have been entitled with no less appropriateness, *Dit des Bordeaux* of Paris. Guillot has finished with those of the Cité; he traverses the Grand-Pont-au-Change and continues his way into the Ville on his pornographic quest.

In the rue des Lavandières, "where there are many laundresses" (*ou il a maintes la vendieres*), he gives us to understand that these women do not limit themselves to rinsing linen in the river. In all times, the *blanchisseuses* have had the same reputation, and the queen whom they elected each year possessed powers analogous to those of the king of the ribalds, but only in her own states and over her own subjects. Guillot does not linger over these joyous ribaudes; he pursues his route through the muddy streets of the quartier des Halles; to refresh himself, he enters for a moment a tavern of the *place aux Pourceaux*, which later became the *place aux Chats*, then the *fosse aux Chiens*, for the reason that they buried carrion and sewage there; it is the intersection formed by the rues Saint-Honoré, des Déchargeurs and de la Lingerie. Guillot, who here complains of a lack of contentment (*Guillot, qui point d'heur bon n'as*), says, however, that he has found his tracks (*sa trace*), his road or, rather, what he is seeking, the trail of some pretty *galloise*, with whom he can empty a pot of claret or of muscavet. In the rue Bethisy, he is not astonished at bumping against a man who is engaged in a conference with a ribaude, without caring if he brings blushes to the cheeks of the passers-by:

*Un homs trouvai en ribaudez,  
En la rue de Betisi  
Entré: ne fus pas éthisi.*

Guillot did not turn aside for a little thing like this. He had arrived in the rue de l'Arbre-Sec, and he was careful not to forget a little *cul-de-sac*, which still exists under the name of *Cour Baton*, and which formerly possessed the indecent name of *Coul de Bacon*. It is certain that, in the local parlance, the word



*bacon* was not endowed with the sense of flesh of salted pig, nor are we to seek in this word an image more or less close to its primitive sense. It was, simply, a court of ribaldry (*cour de ribaudie*), with its wells, about which amorous ladies held their assizes. Guillot does not scruple to say:

*Trouvai et puis Col de bacon  
Où l'on a trafarcie maint c....*

A curious philosophical dissertation might be made upon this verse, which we, however, recommend to the shade of Leduchat, and which, rightly done, will permit the reestablishment of the true acceptance of the old verb *trafarcier* or *trafercer*, which the *Complement du Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* translates badly enough by *traverser*. Guillot follows the bank of the river and arrives at the entrance of the great street which leads to the gate of the Louvre; the nearness of the river describes sufficiently well the dames whom he encounters, and who sell their *denrées* at a price too elevated for his purse:

*Dames i a gentes et bonnes;  
De leurs denrées sont trop chiches (or riches).*

He does not lose his time in bargaining for what he is not able to buy, and so he takes his way toward the Saint-Honoré. After a certain rue de Maître-Huré, a street of which it is not possible now to determine the position, although it was near the rue des Poulies, he undoubtedly had to avail himself of the politeness of certain ladies who wished him welcome:

*La rue trouvai-je maistre Huré,  
Lez lui séant dames polies.*

In making of the *maître Huré* a living person instead of the name of a street, one would be forced to accuse this person of an odious trade worthy of the *dames polies* with whom he ap-

pears to have been surrounded. Guillot remarks nothing relating to Prostitution in the two streets of la Truanderie, where, however, he does not omit showing us the famous Wells of Love: *le puits le carrefour despart*, he merely says; but he is ravished in the rue Mauconseil:

*Une dame vi sur un seil,  
Qui moult se portoit noblement;  
Je la saluai simplement,  
Et elle moi, par saint Loys!*

The habits of this lady did not differ from those of others of her kind whom we see, in the same streets, practicing the same trade as formerly, waiting and lying in wait for their prey on the thresholds of their houses, at the entrances of somber alleys, calling to and inviting the passers-by. Guillot, who swears by St. Louis when he replies to this libidinous appeal, might well have recalled to this ribaude, the ordinances of the holy King. When he is in the rue Saint-Martin, he listens to the singing of the office of Notre-Dame de Saint-Martin-des-Champs, and he arms himself with continence in order to complete without excess baggage his voyage in search of impure places. He rapidly traverses the rue Beaubourg, which might have offered him the means of satisfying all the instincts of debauchery:

*Alai droitement en Biaubourc,  
Ne chassoie chievre ne bouc.*

From the rue des Étuves, he adventures into a rue Lingarière, which could have been no other than the rue Maubue, one of the most ancient fiefs of Prostitution:

*Là où leva mainte platrière  
D'archal mise en oeuvre pour voir,  
Plusieurs gens pour leur vie avoir.*

These ones, who raised an iron grill work to look out into the street, were without doubt the ordinary inhabitants of this rue

Maubue, in which there were as many *clapiers* as there were houses; as many dissolute men and women as there were inhabitants. The neighboring streets resented the shameful proximity of this one. Guillot is content with naming the rue Quincampoix (*Qui qu'en poit*), the rue Aubry-le-Boucher and the Conr  rie, which the modesty of the fifteenth century had made into *Corroierie*, and which is at present hidden in the rue de Cinq-Diaments by allusion to its indecent origin. He fears that evil may come upon him as he approaches the rue Trousse-Dache, which had drawn its ignoble name from the still more ignoble manners of its customary population.

*La rue Amaury de Roussi  
Encontre Troussedache chiet,  
Que Dieu garde qu'il ne nous meschiet!*

Guillot is approaching the end of his peregrinations; he is so fatigued that he sits down to take a few moments repose in the rue des Arcis; he soon resumes his course and neglects, undoubtedly, to name certain streets as being especially effected by Prostitution. Thus, in passing the rue de l'  table-du-Cloistre, which could not have been any other than the rue du Cloitre-Saint-Merry, he is surprised at not meeting any bordelieres of the sort he had seen there at another period, and he recognizes the fact that this street is now respectable (*honestable*); but when he comes to Saint-Merry en Bailleho  ,—*o   je trouvai beaucoup de boe*, he says—this rue Bailleho  , whose name was but a hideous soubriquet, and which later took that of *Brisemiche*, which it has preserved to our day, does not offer him any reminiscence of libertinism, and he leaves it without describing it as it deserves. He advances in the Marais, and gives a glance of the eye at the rue du Pl  tre:

*Ou maintes dames leur emplastre  
A maint compagnon ont fait battre,  
Ce me semble pour eux esbattre.*

Guillot is inexhaustible in finding periphrases freer than they are naïve to characterize the places of which he is in search. At the carrefour *Guillori*, the name of which was equivalent to that of *Jean-de-l'Épine* which it later bore, all the obscenity contained in which the savant De l'Aulanye has not failed to bring to life, Guillot no longer knows whom to listen to:

Li un dit *ho!* l'autre *hari*.

We must believe that he found himself between two meschines, each of whom desired to seduce him for herself; but he resisted them: *Ne perdis pas mon essien*, he says, and debouches into the rue Gentien, now the rue des Couquilles, where dwells a *biau varlet* who, it may be, inspired in him a guilty thought. He does not risk himself in the rue l'Esculerie, which was the cul-de-sac of Saint-Faron, and which did not number one honest man among its inhabitants; he strides rapidly down the rue de Chartron, or des Mauvais-Garcons, near Saint-Jean en Grève:

*On mainte dame en chartre ont  
Tenu maint v.. pour se norier (nourrir).*

It is the second time that Guillot shows us, *en chartre*, the despicable artisans of Prostitution; it is clear that their cloistral state was not voluntary but depended solely on police regulation. In the rue du Roi de Sicile, Guillot remembers a lady named Sedile, who lodged in the rue Renaut-Lefèvre, *où elle vend et pois et febves*, he says, in the figurative language to which he has recourse in expressing the mysteries of debauchery. He then makes his way cautiously into the rue de Pute-y-musse, the significant name of which does not permit of any doubt as to its character: this *rue bordeliere*, as the people had baptized it, preserved always, in tradition, this indecent name, although an attempt had been made to change it into *Petite-Musc* and into *Cloche-Perche*, the name it still bore upon the street sign. The virtue of Guillot had escaped many dangers, when he entered the rue Tyron, where he went to see Dame Luce:



*Y entrai dans la maison Luce  
Qui maint en la rue Tyron:  
Des dames hymnes vous diron.*

We do not think, with the Abbé le Boeuf, that there is question here of canticles or religious hymns, which might have been raised by a convent of penitent women. The *maison Luce* has all the physiognomy of a bad house, and the hymns sung in it were evidently addressed to Venus. Such is the gallant abbey which we persist in seeing in this street, in which archaeologists have imaginatively placed a dwelling belonging to the Abbot of Tiron. Guillot, at the end of his excursion, proceeds to show himself a good time; in the rue Percée, one of the five streets which then bore his name, indicating an ancient *impasse* transformed into a street, he takes his repose and his refreshment:

*Une femme vi destrecié  
Pour soi pignier, qui ne donna  
De bon vin....*

This lady, who combs\* herself, or adjusts her clothing, as she pours wine for Guillot, could have been no other than a public woman. But Guillot is not tired; he goes from the rue des Poulies-Saint-Taul into the rue des Fauconniers,

*Où l'on trouve bien, por deniers,  
Pour son cors solacier.*

He does not tell us whether he made use of this recipe which he gives his readers. Then, in the rue aux Commanderesses, which is today the rue de la Coutellerie, Guillot contradicts himself by saying:

*Où el a maintes tencheresses (querelleuses)  
Qui ont maint homme pris au brai (à la pipée).*

---

\*The Lorelei *Motif*.

Finally, the task of Guillot is achieved; he has gathered the mud from all the streets of Paris, and he glories in his *Dit*, which he has rhymed in their honor, without fearing to dedicate this work, which is filled with impurities, "to the sweet Lord of the firmament" and "to his very sweet and dear mother" (*au doux Seigneur du Firmament and a sa tresdouce chiere mere*).

Notwithstanding this dedication, which fails to purify the rhymes of Guillot, another anonymous poet who lived at the end of the fourteenth century conceived the idea of appropriating the *Dit des Rues*, by depriving it of its obscene ear-marks and by rejuvenating the style of this ballad, in which many streets were unrecognizable on account of changes in name. It was Henri Geraud who published this new *Dit* from a manuscript in the national Archives, and who dated it as following the Subsidy (*Taille*) imposed upon the inhabitants of Paris in 1292, in his work entitled *Paris Sous Philippe-le-Bel*. Let us remark in this connection that the records of the *Taille* contained no details which may be taken as referring to Prostitution, which would tend to prove that the women *folles de leurs corps* did not participate, at least under this designation, in extraordinary levies, and that their low condition exempted them from paying a proportional tax. The poet who desired to remake the poem of Guillot, but who frequently does no more than reproduce it in abbreviated form, was particularly concerned with removing from it anything which tended to give it a libertine or unsavory character. This anonymous bard, in place of picturing Guillot for us as going from street to street to discover bad houses, has invented a fable amusing enough: he takes the stage himself, as being newly disembarked at Paris, where he had never been before, and he runs all over this capital, seeking, from street to street, his wife, whom he had lost in the neighborhood of Notre-Dame; nothing can distract him from his search, which proves fruitless, and all the women whom he meets at every step, cannot make him forget his own, until, having ended his conjugal pursuit, through 310 streets, which he is careful to enumerate, he finally cries:

*Tant l'ay quise, que j'en suis las!  
Or la quiere quila voudra:  
Jamais mon cor pas ne la querra.*

In this nomenclature of speech, he speaks of nothing but *chambrieres*, which were to rent in the rue des Lavendières, and of the *trusseresses* of the rue aux Commanderesses; but he cites, otherwise, the most ill-famed streets without even alluding to the nature of their ill renown.

After the *Dit des Rues* of Guillot, there is an interval of nearly a century till the first ordinance of the provost of Paris, which fixes the places in which Prostitution was permitted to have free course without being exposed to any penalty. This ordinance, reported by Delamare, is of the 18th of September, 1367. We may see already the moralizing influence of the reign of Charles V. In this ordinance, the provost enjoins all women of dissolute life to go and dwell in the bordeaux and public places which are destined for them; namely: "at the Abreuvoir Mâcon in la Boucherie, in the rue du Froidmantel, near the Clos Bruneau, in Glatigny, in the Cour Robert-de-Paris, in Baillehoé, in Tyron, in the rue Chapon, in Champ-fleury." These are almost the same places that Guillot had designated in the *Dit des Rues*, but their number has been infinitely restricted, and we may conclude from this that the provost police had endeavored to diminish the deplorable effects of debauchery by disputing the territory over which it was permitted to spread itself. The provost of Paris, moreover, forbade all honorable persons to rent their houses to women of evil life in any other place, under pain of losing the amount of the rental; he also forbade these women to purchase houses out of the streets reserved for their trade, under pain of losing these houses. Those who were found practicing their infamous commerce in other places might be, upon the requisition of two neighbors, arrested by the sergeants and led away as prisoners to the Châtelet. After establishment of the fact, they were chased out of the city, a levy being made upon their goods in the amount of eight Parisian sols from each of them as salary

for the sergeants. There is every evidence that this police measure was executed with extreme rigor.

The asylums of tolerance which the provost of Paris accorded to Prostitution were a sort of courts rather than whole streets; we shall see later places of much the same appearance in the courts of Miracles, which contained beggars and mendicants, thieves and other malefactors, as the courts of ribaldry did public women and the *dissolute men* who were their ignoble accomplices. The Abreuvoir Mâcon was, in the fourteenth century, a group of hovels environing a putrid alley which descended to the river near the Pont Saint-Michel, at the corner of the rue de la Huchette. This *arbrevoir* (horse pond), which the titles of 1272 designate as *Aquatorium Matisconense* and *Adaquatorium comitis Matisconensis*, drew its name from the proximity of the hôtel des Comtes de Mâcon, situated in the street which still bears their name. This bad place has been perpetuated on the same spot down to our day. It had a horrible celebrity in the sixteenth century, and libertines insisted on honoring it with the impure analogies of its name, which they were obstinate in pronouncing in an indecent fashion. It was undoubtedly on account of this gross equivocation that an attempt was made to debaptize the Abreuvoir Mâconnais and to make of it the *Arbrevoir du Cagnart*, either because it served as a nocturnal retreat for *cagnardiers* (river-rats) or because the inhabitants of the river bank raised ducks (*canards*). In any case, there were many *cagnardieres*, dangerous vagabonds, who were so-called, according to Pasquier, on account of their mode of life, for, like the ducks, "they made their dwelling on the water." Borel, on the other hand, would have it that *cagnardier* is derived from *canis* and that it denotes *those who live like dogs*.

It is difficult to be precise about the place the provost calls *la boucherie*, without any other designation; but although many butchers had set up their stalls in different quarters of the Capital, we may presume there is reference here to the Grand Boucherie of the Apport de Paris, which existed from the tenth century opposite the Châtelet, and which was successively enlarged in



such a manner as to form a sort of burrough in the middle of the city. It was there the beasts, the flesh of which was afterwards sold throughout Paris, were killed and carved. It is to be understood that the provost would authorize the sojourn of ribaudes in the midst of a population of ribauds, like the butchers, the fleecers (*écorcheurs*) and the knackers (*équarisseurs*); there was, at all periods and in all countries, a mark of infamy attached to those professions which exhaled the odor of the blood of animals. On the other hand certain conditions of morality were demanded of those who handled the viands and who carved them on the stalls of the Grand Boucherie.

The clos Bruneau, the reputation of which had been established by Guillot, a task he had likewise performed for the rues de Glatigny de Baillehoé and Tyron, included also, in the fifteenth century, a vast space, filled with gardens and vineyards, although the rues Saint-Jean-de-Beauvais and Saint-Hilaire had been formed out of the territory of this close; the *bordes*, filled with women of evil life, had been from high antiquity widely spread throughout the environs of the clos Brunel, and perhaps were to be found in it, behind the hedges and among the vineyards. The rue Froidmantel, which has been named alternately Frementel, Fresmantel, Fremanteau, etc., in Latin *Frigidum mantellum*, and which has become the rue Fromentel, despite its etymology, certainly owed its primitive name to a comic allusion to the ordinances of St. Louis, who deprived of their mantle and their *pelicon* women convicted of Prostitution; those who inhabited the streets of prostitutes, were then, naturally, deprived of their mantle: hence, their nickname of *dames de Froidmantel*.

The fief of Glatigny, which belonged in 1241 to Robert and to Guillaume de Glatigny, had given its name to a labyrinth of narrow and unprepossessing alleys which Prostitution occupied as its special privilege and of which it had made the famous *Val d'amour*; Guillot, who entered it by the light of day, had seen there *dames au corps gent*, whom he never feared to meet upon his route. The immodest destiny of Glatigny persisted down to the seventeenth century, when the adjacent streets had

been rebuilt and were better inhabited. Sauval and his continuators do not tell us in what quarter the Cour Robert-de-Paris was situated, and the name under which this Court is designated would not aid us in determining its situation, if the Subsidy of 1292 did not end our uncertainty on this point. This *Cour*, which must have been very small, since the tax roll did not number more than thirteen taxable persons, stretched to the rue Bail-lehoé, which served it as a corollary and which included the same sort of inhabitants. Henri Geraud supposes that the rue du Renard-Saint-Merry had been carried through to form the Cour Robert-de-Paris. The rue Chapon, which has not changed its name, took that name in the thirteenth century from one of its inhabitants, Robert Beguon, or Begon, or Capon, whom we suppose to have been a king of vagabonds, a master beggar, for *begon* or *beguon* appears to have been derived from *beguinus*, which meant originally *quêteur* or *mendiant*, in English, *begging*; *Capon*, which comes from *capus*, bird of prey, or falcon, was synonymous with *beguon*. We do not think it was by antiphrasis that the name of Chapon was given to a street which was especially devoted to debauchery. Finally, the rue de *Champfleury*, which, under the name of rue de la Bibliothèque, has always religiously preserved its traditions of the *bordeau*, had been opened a few years after the establishment of the *parc du Louvre*, for, in the Subsidy of 1292, it numbers only four taxable persons. This rue de *Champ-fleury*, was composed then of but a few small houses, enclosed with hedges and shaded by trees, in which Prostitution had nothing to fear from the curious glances of passers-by, who came there only to find what they were seeking.



## CHAPTER XI

WE SHALL continue our pornographic voyage in old Paris by calling attention to the suspect streets which are not mentioned as such in the poem of Guillot or in the ordinances of the Châtelet. The ancient names of these streets are almost always an indication of their individual character. In the first place, in the Cité, we shall find that, despite the general custom which removed women of evil life from the center of cities, to a place beyond the walls and, so to speak, beyond the community life, Prostitution had been preserved in a number of streets in the neighborhood of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre, which had witnessed the formation of the first sorority of the Magdalen, as we have reported in following the traditions collected by Dubreul and Sauval. It was altogether natural that the neighborhood of the *Val d'Amour* of Glatigny should have been invaded by ribaudes, who went there "to commit sin" (*commettre le péchié*), according to the expressions to be found in ancient manuscripts. It might be asserted that the majority of these horrible alleys, which disappeared a number of years ago in the course of the great public works in the old Lutetian city, were in the Middle Ages a permanent theatre of debauchery, although the regulations of the municipal police had endeavored to circumscribe this life within the sanctuary of Glatigny. The rues des Marmousets, Cocatrix, d'Enfer, de Perpignan and others, which formed a labyrinth of houses jutting one upon another, deprived of daylight and air, were marvellously suited to the habits of the *bordellières*. We know, for example, that the rue de Perpignan had been the rue Charoui on account of a wine shop or cabaret known as the Char doré (*de carro aurico*); Guillot speaks of this cabaret:

*En Charoui,—bonne taverne achiez ovri.*



Every tavern became at need, a place of Prostitution. This tavern of the rue Charoui must have been adjoined by a garden planted with roses, since the street took successively the significant names of *Champrousiers*, *Champflory*, and *Champrosy*. This field of roses was perhaps but an image of the pleasure which one went to seek in this cabaret, which came to be replaced by a tennis court, from which the street drew its final name *Pampignon* or *Perpignan*. The name of *Val d'Amour* was applied more particularly to the narrow entrance of the rue de Glatigny, which descended toward the river, and which led to the port Saint-Landry. Along this port, where came a few boats laden with wood and wheat, ran a girdle of houses, which, leaning one against the other, and barely able to stand alone, bathed in the water their worm-eaten bases; these houses belonged by right to a Prostitution of the most abject sort, which we shall see everywhere taking refuge on the banks of rivers. The dark and damp street, which these hideous structures formed from the rear, was called sometimes the rue du *Port-Saint-Landry-sur-l'Yeu* and sometimes the rue du *Fumier*. The family of the Ursins did not hesitate to build there a *Hôtel* where dwelt one of the most illustrious members of this family. Juvanal des Ursins, provost of merchants and chancellor of France under Charles VI, was the one who dwelt there. The presence of this grave personage in a street so ill-famed led to a change in the name of the street, which was known from then on as the rue des Ursins; but its lower extremity (*via inferior*) was called the rue d'Enfer, by allusion to the damnable life which its inhabitants led. We have already hazarded a conjecture, perhaps a rash one, regarding the rue des Marmousets, which Guillot appears to picture to us as frequented by ribauds, rather than by ribaudes. However, a list of the streets of Paris, which the Abbé Lebeuf believes to have been drawn up in 1450, registers this street under the name of the rue des *Marmouzètes*. We know also that a great dwelling, known as the maison des Marmousets (*domus Marmosetarum*), to which one mounted by means of external stairs, existed there up to the sixteenth century. Did

this dwelling contain a court of ribaldry? Near it, there was a place of this sort, called the *cour Ferry*, which had given its name to the rue des Trois-Canettes. Must we recognize a similar place in the maison de Cocatrix (*domus Coquatricis*), which extended to the Marmousets, and which bore the name of the street in which it was situated? This street, which the archaeologists of Paris supposed to have been honored with the name of a bourgeois who dwelt in it in the thirteenth century, might rather, from its vile renown, provide a curious field for etymological speculation. Thus, in our old language, *cocatre* signifies a capon half castrated (*chapon châtré à demi*); *cocatrix* is, properly, a lizard which lives in wells and cisterns; figuratively, it is a daughter of joy, who, *fait des coues et des coqs*. according to the facetious expression of an old *contur*. In the *Verba Erotica* of his edition of Rabalais, the learned De l'Aulnaye defines *Cocquatrix* as a prostitute, relying on this definition, and in order to leave no doubt as to the ancient freeholds of the rue Cocatrix, the authors of the great *Histoire de Paris*, Félibien and Lobineau have extracted from the records of Parliament the first lines of a decree which begins thus: "On Tuesday, 15th day of June, 1367, enters Jehanne la Peltiere, plaintiff, of the first part, Maistre Jehan d'Alcy and the other inhabitants of the rue des Marmouzets, of the second part. The plaintiff says that he dwells in the rue Coquatrix, which is formed, where he has kept a brothel for so long a time that there is no memory to the contrary, etc." This passage indicates, moreover, that these streets in which there was a bordel were looked upon as foreign (*foraines*), that is to say, as strangers to the regime and common law of the community.

Opposite the bad houses of Glatigny, one found also, in the Cité, other asylums of Prostitution, known only by the vilest of vagabonds. These were the *Caignard* and the arches of the Calandre and the Marché-Palu. Although the aspect of these places is still, today, sufficiently unprepossessing, it would be difficult to form an idea of what they were like in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when they served as a nocturnal re-

treat for the filthiest debaucheries. The rue de la Calandre, which borrowed its name from the little babbling lark, was filled from morning to night with gatherings of women, who did nothing but "jargon and debate" (*jargonner et débattre*), when they were not engaged in sinning. This street, filled with mud and filth, led to the Marché-Palu, the name of which means a pond or marsh (*palus*), and which was but a sewer, a *trou punais*, as they said in those days. But there were nothing but roses in the alleys which abutted on it, and which were not closed until the middle of the seventeenth century. One of these alleys, which, in the time of Sauval, still existed in part between the first houses of the Petit-Pont and some of the houses of the Marché-Neuf, was called the *Caignard*, "because," says Sauval (Volume I, page 174), "because it served as a passage for men and women of evil life, who passed there in retiring for the night under the structures of the Petit-Pont, where they led a strange life." Finally, vagabond Prostitution still possessed, in the Cité, two nocturnal *champs de foire*, one under the willow-groves of a little island, which, called the *Ile de Gourdain* in the fifteenth century and the *Ile aux Vaches* three centuries before, formed later the western extremity of the Ile de la Cité, and the other, upon a small hill which rose at the eastern extremity and which has always been called the *Terrain*. This hill, which the rubbish from the reconstruction of Notre Dame had reared in the bed of the river, and which the chapter of the cathedral had appropriated without making use of it, became every evening the rendezvous of debauchees and their despicable accomplices; it had been nicknamed for this reason from the year 1258, *la Motte aux Papelards* (*Motta Papelardorum*). A citation from a sermon of Robert de Sorbon on the subject of Conscience gives us to understand the equivocal sense in which the people hereabouts employed the word *Papelards* to designate the shameful pursuers of fallen women: *imo propter hoc dicuntur papelardi, quia frequentant confessiones*. It is a remarkable fact that the sermon of Robert de Sorbon from which Duncange has taken this singular citation, is almost contemporaneous with the

baptism of this *terrain* or *terrail* (*terrale*), where the Papelards found someone to talk to. As to the Ile de la Gourdainne, which had been the Ile aux Vaches, according to ancient names which the archaeologists have not attempted to explain, its appellation offers certain analogies or coincidences with *Goudine*, *Gourgandine* and *Gordane*, which were synonyms for *prostitute*. This island, moreover, in which the Templars were burned under the reign of Phillip the Handsome, appears to have been a place of punishment devoted particularly to obscene crimes, since there was a desire to keep at a distance from the people those guilty ones who had been defiled with this sort of crime, and who might become a source of scandal, even in their dying moments.

In the Quartier de l'Université, which included so many deserted streets, so many closes and uninhabited fields, so many bordes and taverns, Prostitution had many retreats which the sergeants of the Châtelet did not dare to violate, and through which day and night flowed a constant stream of scholastic youth. An ordinance of Henri II pertaining to the life of the suburbs in 1548 might have been applied to these same places two or three centuries before: "A number of houses in the said suburbs are but retreats of knavish folk, taverners, games and bourdeaux, and the ruin of a great number of young folk, who, drawn there by idleness, profusely consume and lose their youth." It is easy to imagine the debauched needs of this University population, composed of robust fellows, the majority of mature age, and frequently perverted by idleness and misery. The ordinance of St. Louis had authorized but two asylums of ribaudes, the Abreuvoir Mâcon and Froidmantel, near the clos Bruneau in the University; but Guillot has indicated six or seven streets where Prostitution was openly practiced. The writers of the time, Jacques de Vitry especially, inform us that each house in the Quartier des Écoles contained at least one bad place. Alain de l'Ile, *le docteur universal*, says of the scholars of his time that they preferred to contemplate the beauties of the young girls rather than those of Cicero. It is the Flemish whom Jacques de Vitry pictures as more corrupt than the others: "They are prodi-



gal," he says, "love luxury, good cheer and debauchery and have manners that are very relaxed." A prodigious quantity of women *de bonne volonté* was required to satisfy the passions of this undisciplined body of youth, which went in bands to its pleasures as to its studies. Rabelais, in his *Pantagruel*, recounting the exploits of Panurge, informs us that the municipal police no longer possessed any authority, in the sixteenth century, over the freeholds of the University, and that the very shadow of an *écolier* was sufficient to put the sergeants of the watch to flight; the result was that dissolute women found themselves under the safeguard of the scholars, the latter being beyond the regulations of the Châtelet. In addition to the rues de la Plâtrière, de Cordeliers, Bon-Puits, des Noyers, des Prêteres-Saint-Séverin, etc., where the author of the *Dit des Rues de Paris* confesses having encountered *mainte mèschinete* we are surprised that he did not also make the acquaintance of the Champ-Gaillard and the Champ-d'Albiac. The Champ-Gaillard was a *place*, or rather a paddock, which extended the length of the walls of Phillip-Augustus, from the Porte Saint-Victor to the Porte Saint-Marcel; the street which was open on this site in the thirteenth century took the name of the rue des Murs on account of its situation; it was later called the rue d'Arras, when a college so named was established there in 1332; but the people who had employed *Champ-Gaillard* to express its nocturnal use, did not give up this name, which was further justified by the establishment of a *ribaudie*, frequented especially by scholars. This bad place still possessed so much celebrity in the sixteenth century that Rabelais who does not speak of it with so much verisimilitude by mere hearsay, cites it along with three others as characteristic of the carryings-on of the scholars of Paris; it is in Chapter VI of the Second Book, where the limousin who counterfeits the French language recounts the deeds of fellows of his kind: "On certain days, we invade the lupanars of the Champ-Gaillard, of Matcon, of the cul-de-sac of Bourbon, and Hueleu and, in this venereal ecstasy, we insert our veretres into the inmost recesses of the pudenda of these most amiable meretricules." The

language of the limousin scholar, who flays the Latin in the belief that he is Pindarizing, is sufficiently unintelligible, fortunately, to be quoted as a monument of the erotic grammar of the University.

In the same chapter of Rabelais, there is also a reference to four cabarets which must have been as ill-famed as the bordeaux, since we know, from many ordinances of the provost, that the majority of the *caves* and taverns where drinking took place were kept by public women or by their pimps (*maquignons*), or *courratiers*. "Then we repair," says the scholar to Pantagruel. "to the meritorious taverns (*tabernes meritores*) of the Pomme-de-Pin, the Castel, the Madeleine and la Mule. Here we have the *tabernae meritoriae* of the Roman historians, notably Suetonius, which proves to us that the word *meretrix* has been taken from the verb *mereri* and the substantive *meritum*. But we shall not endeavor, by means of an archaeological dissertation, to fix the site of these four *meritorious* taverns, but shall limit ourselves to remarking that their names appear to accord with those of the streets in which they were undoubtedly situated. Thus the rue de la Madeleine and the rue de la Pomme in the Cité have become, since the fourteenth century, the rue de la Licorne and the rue des Trois-Canettes, while preserving all the while their cabarets at the signs of La Madeleine and La Pomme-de-Pin; the rue du Châtel or du Château-Fêtu is composed of a part of the rue de la Ferronnerie, abutting on the rue de l'Arbre-Sec, and a house called the *château-Fetu* or the *château-de-Paille*, and the origin of which is not known, has existed for a long time between the church of Saint-Landry and the river: was not the place well chosen for the establishment of a cabaret and all the rest? As to the tavern of La Mule, we must go look for it in the rue du Pas-de-la-Mule, which the establishment of the Place Royale has not deprived of its old name, by imposing on it that of the rue Royale, a name which it has not kept. We shall not hesitate to include, then, in the inventory of the bad houses of Paris, these four famous cabarets, which are frequently mentioned by the poets and *conteurs* of the sixteenth century.

But this digression on cabarets has led us a little afield from the *lupanaires* of the University, all of which we do not pretend to know. The rue Gracieuse, which had first borne the name of the rue d'Albiac, had been built on a tract of land which was called the Champ-d'Albiac, and which was, from time immemorial, devoted to Prostitution; the asylums which it had occupied by hereditary right were not destroyed until 1555, as we shall see under this date. The antiquarian etymologists have found, in the *Comptes* of Paris, the name of a family *d'Albiac* and that of a family *Gracieuse*, which they present to us as the rival sponsors of this same street, so ill populated at all epochs; but if we were to hazard a conjecture which is more in keeping with the character of the place, we should prefer to recognize in the name d'Albiac an allusion to the Albigeois (*Albiaci* and *Albigenses*), who were heretics in religion, but also in love, according to popular opinion, which confounded under the terms *Albigeois* and *Albiacs* all the hopeless debauchees. The Champ-d'Albiac became, then, the Champ de Foire of these impurities, and the street which opened on this retreat, without thereby purifying it, was nicknamed *Gracieuse*, out of mockery or by antinomy.

There were other fields where the ribaudes kept their "little shops of sin" (*boutiques au pérché*), such as the champ de la Boucherie, near the rue des Mauvais-Garçons; the champ Petit, near the rue de Battoir; the champ de l'Allouette, etc. The word *champ* designated ordinarily, a place where one bought and sold. But in our catalogue of streets and alleys of this sort, we cannot forget the rue de l' *Aronde*, or de l'Hirondelle, neighboring the Arbrenvoir Mâcon, which Rabelais, little concerned with obscene etymologies, calls *Matcon*. This rue de l'Hirondelle, which hides itself, dark and infected, behind the houses of the quai Saint-Michel, had drawn its name from the sign of a place of debauchery. Nearby, it would be easy to discover a very significant equivocation in the name of the rue Gât-le-Coeur, which has been called in turn, by an involuntary or malicious corruption, *Villequeux*, *Guillequeux*, *Gilles-Queux*, *Gui-le-Comte*,

etc. At a little distance from this street (apropos of which we should keep in mind the witty parenthesis of Boufflers: *I say THE HEART out of decency*), there was still the rue Pavée, which the good tongues of the time, called, along its length the rue Pavée-d' Andouilles. The neighboring streets, the ancient names of which bear testimony to their ancient industry, were equally infested with bad women. The rue *Sac-à-Lie*, a soubriquet given to women of this sort, has since become the rue Zacharie; the rue de l'Éperon was called the rue de Gaugai (*gautgay*, gave pleasure) and advertised thus sufficiently well the sort of pastimes which were to be found in it. Finally, it was in this labyrinth of alleys, which had replaced the vineyard of Laas or Liaas, that vagabond Prostitution paraded its amours; it is between the rue de Hurepoix and the rue Poupée that we shall endeavor to find the *lupanaire du cul-de-sac de Bourbon*, which the commentators of Rabelais transport to a site near the Louvre. In a word, the University quarter was richer in places of debauchery, or at least, better populated with daughters of joy, than all the other quarters of Paris; there is no need of proofs in this case, if we consider the licentious habits of the scholars, who never left the limits of their domain, and who had close at home sufficient *chiere-lie*, as they would have said, to make it necessary for them to go seek it elsewhere. Scholars who have written about the streets of Paris have confined themselves to rehabilitating them under their own names and their old pornographic traditions; they have failed to remark that these names of streets, born, most of them, as a result of popular whims, were transferred to men rather than the names of men to the streets, and they have almost never taken cognizance of etymology. Thus, when they desire to study the origin of the name of the rue Bordet, which leaves the fountain Sainte-Geneviève and mounts to the rue Mouffetard, at the very spot where the Porte Bordelle was, which has bequeathed its name, they assume that a personage named Pierre de Bordelles (*de Bordelis*) dwelt in this street in the twelfth century and that he naturally left it a perfectly respectable name. "It is a popular



error," says the authors of the *Dictionnaire Historique de la Ville de Paris*," to believe that on account of the resemblance in name, this street must have been formerly devoted to debauchery." It is certain, however, that Pierre de Bordelles himself bore this character, since he possessed a house in this street, which was named *Bordelles, Bourdelle and Bordel*, by reason of its primitive employment and the numerous bordes to be found within the walls of Paris. The rue Bourdelle, which led to the gate of the same name, by no means gives the lie to this indecent appellation, which is also confirmed by the proximity of the Champ Gaillard, which was changed into Chemin-Gaillard, when a street was cut through, and which is now the rue Clopin, a modern name which still reflects the tradition of bad manners attaching to all these streets near the walls and gates of the city.

It merely remains for us to indicate the topographical situation of certain courts of ribaldry, which were called the Courts of Miracles for the reason that beggars who assembled there and who pretended the most hideous infirmities in order to win the public commiseration, would appear there lame, crippled, blind, one-armed, leprous and covered with ulcers, and would return of an evening sound of leg, joyous and well disposed to spend the night in debauchery. These Courts of Miracles contained the population of thieves, vagabonds, robbers, mendicants, and other abject creatures with nothing of the woman in them except the name which they dishonored. The most ancient of these infamous caverns was that of la Grande-Truanderie, which sent whole colonies into all quarters of Paris where the provost police permitted them to open a court. The two great branches of la Truanderie were *the little houses of the Temple*, or *les loges des Aumones* in the rue des Francs-Bourgeois au Marais and the *Cour des Miracles* par excellence, near the Filles-Dieu, between the rues Saint Denis and Montorgueil. There were, in addition, more than twenty courts or retreats of the same sort, where the same base and disorderly life was lead. It will be sufficient to cite the Cour de la Jussienne in the rue Montmarte beside the chapel of prostitutes, dedicated to Saint Mary the Egyptian;

the Court Gentien in the rue des Coquilles; the Cour Brisset, in the rue de la Mortellerie; the Cour de Bavière in the rue Bordet; the Cour Sainte-Catherine and Cour du roi Francois in the rue du Ponceau; the Cour Tricot in the rue Montmarte; the Cour Bacon in the rue de l'Arbre-Sec, etc. Sauval says, in speaking of the dangerous inmates of the rue des Francs-Bourgeois: "At every hour, their street and their house were a cutthroat asylum for debauchery and prostitution." Sauval gives us also a most terrifying picture of the principal Court of Miracles which he had viewed in all its splendor, at the time it served as a refuge the most criminal, most impure, and most ignoble among the people of Paris. It was here that Prostitution with impunity achieved the last degree of vice.

This Court of Miracles had had formerly a considerable extent; but it had become imperceptibly restricted between the rue Montorgueil, the convent of the Filles-Dieu and the rue Neuve-Saint-Sauveur; it no longer consisted of anything more than an irregular plot of ground and a muddy and malodorous cul-de-sac. "To come there," says Sauval, "it is frequently necessary to make a detour in little streets, villainous, stinking, and roundabout; to enter it, it is necessary to descend a long slope, torturous, rugged and unequal. I have seen there a mud house, half buried and about to fall to the ground from old age and rottenness, where dwelt more than fifty families with an infinite number of small children, legitimate, natural and naked." Sauval, who has collected these curious details relating to the inhabitants of the Courts of Miracles, unfortunately tells us nothing about the women whom the *royaume argotique* enrolled under the government *Grand Coesre*. It is to be regretted that we do not possess a physical and moral portrait of these subjects of the king of beggars and *artotiers* when we come upon the following strange detail pertaining to their infamous trade: "Girls and women," related Sauval, "those that are the least ugly, prostitute themselves for two liards, the others for a double, majority for nothing. Many of them give silver to those who have engendered children by their companions, in order that

they may have children like them, and thereby gain the means of exciting compassion and obtaining alms." The tariff of the prostitutes at the great Court of Miracles was undoubtedly what a woman might demand as a price for her shameful favor; but it is to be observed that two liards in the time of Sauval were worth about ten sous in our money, and that the double denier of Tours represented two-thirds of a liard, that is to say three sous in present currency. We doubt if the price of prostitution ever fell lower than this.

It is to be understood that this sort of Prostitution was always beyond the authority of the police of the Châtelet. The poor wretches who practiced it, protected by the franchise of the Court of Miracles, belonged to the cosmopolitan race of beggars and thieves who peopled these asylums of crime. They were covered with rags, squalid and unkempt; the majority, who had *cagot* or Bohemian blood in their veins, were distinguished by their repulsive ugliness, their tawny complexions, their curly hair and their infected odor; those with white skin and blonde hair passed as pretty and served thus as a lure for strangers whose evil star had lead them at night into the environs of the Court of Miracles. The belle trained to this species of chase, would tease the pruriency of the prey she had snared at the corner of a street; sometimes she would burst into tears, inventing a fable designed to excite his compassion; sometimes, by a thousand pretexts, she would induce the imprudent one to follow her; sometimes she would insult him or lure him into an argument with her in order that she might have occasion to cry for aid; then, her accomplices, father, brothers, and friends, would come running at the sound of her voice, and hurl themselves upon the man whom she accused of some imaginary insult, despoiling him on the spot, mistreating and even assassinating him, if he sought to defend himself. The same fate awaited the unfortunate one who had permitted himself to be seduced by this street corner siren, and who had had the courage to follow her into her hole. Again it was a father, a husband or a brother who came to him to demand an explanation of the se-

duction which he had not been given time to accomplish, and by good will or from force the victim would have to pay a ransom which included everything he had upon his person except his clothing. He was lucky if he was permitted to escape safe and sound with his shirt! There is no need to say that the ruses and the theory of this amorous art were taught by the father to his daughter, the husband to his wife, the brother to his sister. Very young children were devoted to the most exorable corruptions; they made of their bodies a pasture, sold, abandoned and sacrificed to the lubricity of their parents or their masters; they had no notion of good or evil, especially with those things which concerned modesty; lad or lass, their first step in life led in the direction of the most shameless Prostitution, and they never emerged from this mud into which they had put their feet. Here in all times was the nursery of prostitutes who would leave it to seek their fortune and who would return when they had grown old in the harness. Here they would continue their trade at a vile price, and if they no longer found two liards or one double for wages, they would resign themselves to a change of occupation and, according to their condition or capacity, they would resort to making horoscopes, reading the future in the lines of the hand, preparing love-beverages, philtres and amulets, or selling the fat and locks of hair of hanged men for evil spells and magical operations.

There is no need for believing that the proprietors of the houses in a street thus given over to the service of public debauchery were greatly interested in restricting this shameful industry which brought them large benefits. We see, on the contrary, from a legal action which was frequently repeated in connection with the rue Baillehoé, that the purpose of a street of this sort constituted a privilege looked upon as very advantageous by the proprietors and *locataires*, who were always jealous in protecting and preserving this privilege. This legal action, of which we find traces here and there in the records of Parliament, lasted for more than a century and was frequently renewed by the interested parties, who were for one part certain



bourgeois, possessors of houses in this infamous street, and for the other part, the curé and the canons of Saint-Merry. The provost of Paris and the King alternately intervened in the debate and served to embroil the parties all the more by their contradictory edicts and ordinances. Parliament, taking up the affair in its turn, sided first with one and then the other, pronounced decrees, and ordered inquiries, but felt it did not have the courage to wipe out laws founded on the legislation of Saint Louis and confirmed by long usage. A decree of the 24th of January, 1388, reported in the *Histoire de Paris* by Félibien and Lobineau (Vol. IV, page 538), makes us acquainted with the state of the question and the reciprocal claims of the parties to the litigation. The dean, the curé and the canons had obtained letters royal definitely suppressing Prostitution in the rue Baillehoé, and an ordinance of the provost of Paris, Jean de Folleville, newly elected, enjoined the public women who inhabited this street to vacate their places; inasmuch as the women were sustained by the proprietors of the houses which they occupied, they were not keen about obeying the ordinances of expulsion; and so, the provost sent archers to drive them out by force and masons to wall up the entrances of their dwellings. The proprietors, damaged in their interests, and indignant at this abuse of authority, made a complaint before Parliament and cited the dean, the curé and the canons of Saint-Merry, whom they accused of having deceived the religion of the King and the provost. These respectable proprietors had delegated their full powers to three of their number, Jacques de Braux, called Jacobin, Philippe Gibier and Guillaume de Nevers. Let us listen, then, to the arguments of each party abused in favor of his own side, the case being undoubtedly heard in solemn audience and pleaded by the best advocates of the Parisian bar.

The dean, the curé and the canons alleged that the King, Saint Louis, had ordered that the ribaudes should not dwell any longer "in decent streets and places" (*en lieux et rues honnêtes*); the acting provost of Paris decided that the rue Baillehoé fell within the conditions of decency prescribed by the ordinance, and he

expelled the ribaudes from this street, condemning to a fine that is to say, to quadruple the rents (*au quadruple du louage*)—the seigneurs of the houses rented to these dissolute women. “The street,” the defenders added, “is near to fine, great and notable ones, where dwell many borgeois and many bourgeoisie, and the canons and chaplins of the said church. Moreover, many inconveniences have ensued and many greater inconveniences may ensue, for if any collier or ribald slays a man, it would be in a church that he would seek a retreat; for it is a fine street and an honest one that goes to Saint-Merry, and from this street into la Verrerie; and in such streets, so honest, there ought not to dwell light women (*femmes folieuses*). Item, that this street is near a monastery, and near the monastery such women ought not to dwell, and it is a road by which the canons and the chaplains must go to church.”

The plaintiffs replied “that it is expedient that such women be kept off the public streets, in suburbs, and that they do less evil and inconvenience there than in foreign streets; that the street is narrow and is not good for any but this trade, and that there are there but small shops and that if anyone there commits any crime he can only flee by the high and honest street and would be more easily taken than if this crime had been committed far from the high street; and that in all times such women have dwelt in the said streets; and that anciently it had a gate but, by reason of an inconvenience which occurred in the said street, the gate was torn down and since that time it has always remained without a wall.” They recalled, on this point, that under the reign of Charles V, Hugues Aubriot, provost of Paris, having visited the bordiaux, suppressed a number of them but left the one in Baillehoé, for the reason that shameful folk had better go there (*gens honteux oseroient mieux y aller*) than in the others. They asserted that the church of Saint-Merry was also interested in seeing that the purpose of the street is not changed, “for the rents which are thereby increased, and this said reason, namely that: *in virorum honestorum domibus saepe lupanaria exercentur, etc.* Dieu Mercy

such an evil never was in Baillehoé!" They argued from the ordinances of Saint Louis, who had willed that there should be a brothel "*il y eût bourdel*" in Baillehoé, as in Glatigny and in the Cour Robert-de-Paris: "thus will that such women should dwell near la Verrerie, and now, there are no more in the Cour Robert de Paris; as a consequence, it is expedient that they should dwell in Baillehoé." They objected, moreover, that this little street was not the natural passage in going to the church, and that the high street of Saint-Merry led there more directly; one might also avoid thus passing the body of Our Lord when it was being brought to the sick, although frequently no secret was made of bearing it through the rue Tiron, which was not any more decent "and it is expedient," they concluded, "that the bordiau should be near the church, for no matter how many women sinned, they are not all damned, and it is expedient that they should dwell near the church, in order that they may be near that from which they are so far. And it is not inconvenient that bordiaux should be near the church, for we see that Glatigny is near Saint-Denis de la Chartre, one of the most devout churches of this city, and also near Saint-Landry." The defense, in their reply, avoided touching on a question so prickly as that of the suitability of churches and bordiaux neighboring each other. They limited themselves in pointing out that the letter of the ordinances of Saint Louis was opposed to having women of evil life dwell near the churches, and they cited a text of the Roman law in support of this decision: *Deterius est quod penes sacrosanctas aedes morentur*. "And by natural right," they added sorrowfully, "there is none so small in this city who may not at need require such women to vacate the vicinity of his house; by all the more reason, the dean who is the curé, and who must go, at matins and other hours, and who must go at all hours to baptize children and succor the sick and bear *corpus Domini*; for it is the most direct road to go from the Church of Saint-Merry to the rue de la Brille (undoubtedly, the rue de Poirier) and Simon-le-Franc, and for the bourgeois to come to the church by way of Baillehoé."

We do not know positively at what epoch this litigation ended, but we must regard as one of its last episodes the ordinance of Henry VI, king of England and of France, who declared, in 1424, in favor of the curé and the chapter of Saint-Merry. It is probable, however, that despite all the royal ordinances or those of the provosts, Prostitution never abandoned a street which it had "enjoyed and used for so long a time that there is no memory to the contrary" (*joui et usé par tel et si long temps, que ne est mémoire du contraire*). But the curé of Saint-Merry took vengeance, it is said, on one of the seigneurs of this street, whom he had had for adversary in the affairs of the little shops of sin, and he had the fellow officially condemned to make honorable amends on a Sunday after the mass, before the door of the church, for having been guilty of eating meat on Friday. This was not all: the chapter, having finally triumphed over judiciary opposition, changed the indecent name of the street, which was thereafter confounded with its neighbor the rue Brisemiche, and which lost in a manner its old ignominious character; for in pronouncing the word Baillehoé, the people added an indecent pantomime and grimaces which no longer had any sense with respect to the rue Taillepain or Brisemiche. All the etymologies of Baillehoé were equally significant, whether one wrote *Baillehoué* or *Baillehore* or *Baillehort* or whether one preferred to adopt the ancient orthography of *Baillehoc* or *Baillehoche*; for the verb *baille* varied in acceptation, according to the word which was used with it, and this word always brought with it an obscene sense; *houe* is an instrument of labor; *hore* is a public woman; *hort* is a violent shock; *hoc* is that; *hoche* is a gash,\* etc. In a word, an indecent image was constantly attached to the names of this street, which, in losing its equivocal names, did not become more decent, since in the last century the women of the rue Brise-miche had still a proverbial celebrity.

The document which we have analyzed in speaking of the litigation of the vestry of Saint-Merry against the seigneurs of

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\*Cf. our similar obscenity.



Baillehoé permits us to fix certain points in pornographic archaeology. We may almost, with certitude, determine the fact that these streets devoted to Prostitution had been formerly closed by night with gates; that these streets, haunted by ribauds and dissolute fellows, were frequently the scene of brawls, murders and grave inconveniences; that nevertheless, houses here rented more dearly than elsewhere and produced good revenues for their proprietors or tenants; that the *femmes folieuses* had free entrance to the churches, where they went less to pray than to seek adventure; finally, that the presence of a bordiau was advantageous to the parish by reason of the alms which its *pensionnaires* paid to the curé and the vestry. Let us remark, moreover, that from then on a custom of the force of law to come down to our day, authorized any bourgeois to make a complaint against any woman of evil life whom he desired to expel from her house or from his own neighborhood, an expulsion which was accomplished by the sergeants of the Châtelet, charged with the policing of prostitutes and places of debauchery.

## CHAPTER XII

WE HAVE said that the *Livre de la Tailles of Paris* for the year 1292 does not present any fact relative to Prostitution; but having examined anew this document which is so precious for the history of Paris at this period, we believe that we may modify, somewhat, this judgment which, while a valid one at the first glance of the eye, deserves to be accepted with certain reservations; for if, in short, we do not find anywhere in the *quêtes* of the subsidy a precise designation of common women who practiced the trade of ribaldry, we are still tempted to recognize them here and there under characteristic soubriquets. It is certain always that these women did not pay tax in the extraordinary levies for the profit of the king in their character of ribaudes; but they did pay tenants of the houses which they inhabited in the city, in addition to their little shops of sin. We know nothing, unfortunately, of the conditions accompanying the levy; for example, it is impossible for us to understand why Paris, which possessed under Phillip the Handsome, a population of 400,000 souls or thereabouts, furnished but 15,200 taxable persons according to the calculations of the savant Henri Geraud, paying altogether 12,218 pounds and 14 sous. These taxables were certainly not the richest inhabitants, whom the privileges of the bourgeois exempted from the tax; they also were not the poorest, as we see from the differences in fortune which seem to account for the variations in the tax. We shall not credit the strange suppositions of Dulaure, who would have it that the number of *tailles* indicated the number of *feux* (fire-sides); if this were the case, the tax roll would not mention as subject to a special tax, children, valets, chambermaids, and workers' helpers. We shall hazard a conjecture which is not based upon written proofs, by saying that the tax only affected individuals lodged on the ground floor having an *ouvuoir* or

*fenetre*, or a direct issuance upon the king's pavement. This conjecture, which there is, moreover, nothing to contradict, possesses the advantage of explaining naturally the singular disproportion which existed between the number of inhabitants and that of the taxable persons, among whom women did not count for the tenth part.

The tax of 1292 enables us to determine the fact which is confirmed by a number of subsequent ordinances of the provost of Paris: namely, that the streets affected by public debauchery received women of evil life only at certain hours of the day, in the *bordiaux* or *clapiers* in which they freely practiced their abject profession. We shall see that they did not lodge for the night in those same streets, as though the legislator desired that they should breathe the air of a decent life by being forced to leave the atmosphere of their infamies. We shall meet them, then, only in the neighboring streets, and we shall find little difficulty in locating them by their popular nicknames and the uniformity of the tax they paid. Before going to look for them in the parishes where they hid their existence, which were frequently Christian and almost honorable in appearance, since they were sometimes married and kept a home, we must extract from the *Livre de la Taille* a very bizarre detail which the editor has let pass unperceived, but which relates to the history of Prostitution. In the census of *menues gens* who resided in the Quartier Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and who were all taxed indifferently in the amount of one sol or twelve deniers a head, we are astonished to find the king of the ribalds of Queen Marie (*roi des ribaus de la royne Marie*: see page 5 of the *Livre de la Taille*, published with *commentaries* by H. Geraud). Who is this king of the ribalds who had his dwelling in the rue d'Ostetriche today the rue de l'Oratoire, opposite the Louvre? One thing is certain, we are not here dealing with an officer of the household of the king of France; and his miserable quota testifies clearly enough to his low condition. This is not the king of the ribalds of the court of France, this one who pays into the

treasury the same revenue as Adam le cavelier, Jehan menjuepain (the mendicant) and Helissent, ferbiere de linge.

There was, as we have said, a king of the ribalds elected in each *court of ribaldry*, and this species of porter, charged with maintaining order in the clapier, was but a shabby caricature of the king of the ribalds of the royal household. That of the rue d'Osteriche belonged to the poorest ribaudie of the city, and this pompous title with which he decorated himself, did not prevent his being a beggar of a hideous sort. As to that *royne Marie*, whose officer and minister he declares himself to be, she could have been none other than a ribaude or some old procuress who had been enthroned as queen by her subjects or her companions. There is no other conclusion to draw from this description of queen, applied to a woman by the name of Marie, who possessed a king of the ribalds taxed at twelve deniers; and it is futile to attempt to prove that this pitiful king of the ribalds could, in any case, belong to Queen Marie de Brabant, widow of Phillip the Handsome, who was still living at this time. We are justified in believing, from this simple indication, that at least in certain ribaudies, the public women gave themselves a queen, like the other corporations of women, notably the laundresses, the seamstresses, the herring-women, etc. This queen must naturally have had a king of the ribalds, charged with a special policing of the bad house where his immodest mistress reigned. Perhaps, also, the name of *queen* was attributed to the governess of a court of feminine ribalds. We have seen, in following the histories of the kings of France, in the sixteenth century, a governess of this species, to whom the ordinances of Frances I and Henri II do not accord the honors of an indecent royalty. In general, the clapier being honored with the comical title of *abbey* in the picturesque language of the people, the directress of such an abbey was called the *abbess* or *prioress*. We might also suppose that this Queen Marie had been elected by one of those joyous associations of *fous*, *conards*, *jongleurs*, etc., who simulated a government with a burlesque imitation of the officers of royalty.



We come, then, in our inquiry to those women of no profession whom the *Tailles* of 1292 shows us as lodged in the suspect streets and in the environs of those streets devoted to Prostitution. We shall remark, first of all, among the *menues gens* of the parish Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, each inhabitant of which was taxed twelve deniers: Florie du Boscage (of the wood), who dwelt beyond the port Saint-Honoré and, as a consequence, upon the moat of the city; Ysabiau l'espinete in the rue Froidmantel of the Louvre, which has barely disappeared with its old retreats of debauchery; Jehanne la Normande in the rue de Biauboir which still existed forty years ago under the name of the rue de Beauvais; Edeline l'Emragiée (the Mad) in the rue Richebourg, which is at present the rue du Coq-Saint-Honoré; Aaliz la Bernée, at the corner of the Abreuvoir, which was at the entrance of the rue des Poulies; Aaliz la Morelle, (the night shade) in the rue Jehan Evrout, which has left no traces; la Baillie (the Bailiff) and Perronnelle-aux-chiens (hussy of the dogs) in the rue des Poulies; Letois, daughter of Aaliz-sans-argent (Alice without Money) in the rue D'Averon, which is the rue Bailleul. It is a fact, bizarre enough, that the sombre and fettered streets inhabited by these women, whose soubriquets indicate well enough their profession, never ceased to be inhabited by the riff-raff of the population. Among the *menues gens* of the Quartier Saint-Eustache, we find Perronelle la Sirène (or Siren), Anès l'Alèllete (the Lark), Jehanne la Meigrète, Marguerite la Galaise, Geneviève la Bien-Fêtée (the Well-Feted), Jehanne la Grant, etc. The same soubriquets have been preserved traditionally in the world of popular Prostitution.

In the same quarters and the same streets, the tax of 1292 indicates also, by similar soubriquets, a number of women who might have lived also by their bodies, but who drew from their trade a better livelihood, since they are taxed at the rate of two, three, and even five sous. Such were, beyond the Porte-Saint-Honoré, Ysabiau la Camuse (the Pug-Nose) and Maheut la Lombarde; in the rue Froidmantel, Marguerite la Brete and Ysabiau la Clopine (the Lame); in the rue Biauvor, Anès la

Pagesse (the Page); in the rue Richebourg, Juliotte la Beguine (the Nun), Jehanne la Bourgoingne, Maheut la Normande, Gile la Boiteuse (the limping one), etc. It must be observed that the poor and ill-famed streets which accepted such inhabitants as these were not occupied otherwise except by artisans of the vilest sort; fishermen, ferry-men, cobblers, old-clothes dealers, etc. In the streets with the most traffic and those that were the best inhabited one often did not remark a single woman of doubtful character. We shall meet such suspect women as these only in the neighborhood of those streets occupied by the bordelières, where they did not have their lodgings, as we shall prove further on. Thus, in the rue de Glatigny, where debauchery had its most famous *atelier*, one undoubtedly did not come upon very honorable persons: there were Margue la Crespiniere, Jean le Pasteur, Helois la Chandelière, Jaque le Savetier, etc. But when we see among the tenants of this infamous street a certain Jeharaz, who pays 22 sols, Guibert the Roman, who pays 25, the wife of Nicolas, the beer merchant, and his two daughters, who pay together 38 sols, and Giles Marescot, who pays 36—in view of these assessments, we are tempted to take these individuals as middle-men of the bad houses, and to go to seek their *pensionnaires* in the neighboring streets. Among them we find Mabile l'Escot (or l'Ecossaise), Perronèle Grosente, Lucette, Lorencete, Agnes aux Blanches Mains (of the white hands), Jehannette la Popine and others whom we recognize as ladies of love (*femmes d'amour*). In a center of Prostitution not less active than the *Val d'Amour*, in Baillehoé and in the Cour Robert-de-Paris, we do not come upon more than four women without a profession among the thirty-eight taxable ones, the most heavily taxed of whom, it is true, does not pay more than five sols: they are Ameline Belessez, Ameline la Petite (the Little One), Anès la Bourgoingne and Maheut la Normande, who are taxed at two sols each; the chambermaid of Maheut is taxed the same as her mistress, whose labors and blessings apparently she shares. But in the adjacent streets there are women recognizable by their nicknames, and who belong undoubtedly to the ribaudie of Bail-

lehoé, although they have their domicile in Honete Mesgine. Let us cite merely Chretienne and Marie, her sister, in the rue Neuve-Saint-Merry; Juliane and Anès, *her nurse*, in the same street; Ameline la Grasse (the Fat), in the cloister; Marie la Noire (the Black), Marie la Picarde, Anès la Grosse (the Large), Jehanne la Sage (the Wise), in the rue Simon-le-Franc, etc. We do not have here, certainly, the whole personnel of Prostitution in these populous quarters, and it is very difficult for us to appreciate the motives which led to including one ribaude rather than another in the taxable lists.

It must be admitted also that all the prostitutes were not occupied exclusively with their shameful profession, and that the majority of them were scattered among various kinds of trades. It would appear to be in accordance with the spirit of the ordinances of St. Louis, which were the ones that control Prostitution, that every woman should be free to do what she pleased with her body, and might make a traffic of it at her own discretion, provided she abandoned herself to sin only in "the ancient bordeaux and streets ordained for this from all antiquity" (*les anciens bordeaux et rues à ce ordonnées d'anciennete*). From the terms of many acts of parliament, Delamare, who had under his eyes all the monuments of the legislation of the Châtelet, drew the same opinion regarding the state of public women, who possessed this infamous condition only in the practice of their shameful profession, and who otherwise found almost an equality with the respectable women. It would result naturally from this singular distinction, that the municipal authorities did not molest women in their secret life, so long as they conformed scrupulously to the ordinances, and did not become common ribaudes, except by putting foot in the places devoted to local and transient Prostitution. She who prostituted herself in a bad house, found purification, so to speak, as soon as she had left it. We may explain in this manner a judgment of the magistrates of Bordeaux, who condemned to the gallows a man guilty of having raped a public woman. This memorable judgment is reported by Angelo-Stefano Garoni, in his treatise on juris-

prudence entitled: *Commentaria in Titulum de meretricibus et lenonibus Constit. Mediol.* "The infamous places of prostitution," says Delamare, in his *Traité de la Police*, were common to a number of these public women, and their dwellings were separate from them. This was a place of assemblage, whither they had the liberty of repairing for their evil commerce, and which was marked out for them in order to make them readily recognizable, and to keep away those who were still susceptible to some feeling of modesty. It was forbidden them (according to the *Livre Vert Ancien* of the Châtelet, fol. 159) to commit vice anywhere else, even in their individual dwellings, under penalties laid down in the regulations. They thought to evade these wise precautions by repairing so late to the public places, that they would be barely known there, and the neighbors would not see them go in.

From then on, regulations were enacted concerning the hours of entering and leaving the bordeaux and clapiers, which were not open till daybreak and were closed at sunset. There is no evidence, however, that the women who went there to commit sin, were subject to any registration whatsoever; but we may suppose, certainly, that they were called upon to meet a fixed assessment which figured in the budget of the city, or which was part of the revenues of the royal king of the ribalds. The provost of Paris enacted an ordinance on the 13th of March, 1374, decreeing that: "all women who assemble in the rue Glatigny, the Abreuvoir Mâcon, Baillehoé, the Cour Robert-de-Paris and other bordeaux shall be held to retire from and leave these streets after the hour of ten at night on pain of a fine of 20 Parisian sous for each infraction." The amount of the fine, which was equivalent to more than 20 francs, proves, it seems to us, that the wages of a day of sin were not less than this fine, which went undoubtedly as a moiety to the sergeants of the Châtelet; it was later left to the discretion of the judge, and was, as a consequence, doubled or quadrupled, which permits us to suppose, that women of high rank did not fear, sometimes, to run the immodest risks of these infamous places and cared little



for the fine, provided they purchased thereby impunity and secrecy regarding their dissolute life. The 30th of June, 1395, the provost of Paris forbade all *filles et femmes de joie* "to appear in the bordeaux or clapiers after the curfew had sounded, on pain of prison and an arbitrary fine." Delamare, who reports this ordinance after the *Livre Rouge Ancien* of the Châtelet, adds a detail which he has verified upon the books of the provost: "The ordinances were renewed twice every year, and the hour of their retreat was fixed at six in winter and seven in summer, which is the hour when curfew is sounded."

Such was the force of custom, such was the empire of habit in the good old days that it took several centuries to rescue from Prostitution one of the streets which Louis IX had especially devoted to it. When the ordinance of the provost of Paris of the 18th of September, 1367, had renewed and confirmed the purpose of these disrespectable streets, the Bishop of Mâcon addressed representations to the King, Charles V, seeking to have the rue Chapon rescued from this impure destiny. The bishops, counts of Châlon, had possessed for a number of centuries a large *hôtel*, situated in the rue Transnonian, called then Trousse-nonain, between the rues Chapon and Court-au-vilain, now the rue de Montmorency. The women of evil life had taken possession of all the streets, but they assembled every day in their asylum in the rue Chapon, and there, their songs, their laughter, their altercations, their indecencies, incessantly disturbed the eyes, ears and consciences of the pious inhabitants of the hôtel Châlons. The Bishop, who was a member of the privy council of the King, employed all the prestige he possessed to remove from the neighborhood of his dwelling, and at the same time, that of the cemetery of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs his odious neighbors who appeared to insult at once the living and the dead. Charles V enacted an ordinance, dated the 3d of February, 1368, (new style, 1369), in which he put back into effect the former edict of St. Louis against Prostitution in general. In order not to put this edict into complete execution, but merely to apply it to the rue Chapon, he drew certain conclusions from the pro-

hibitive ordinance of 1254, which were neither just nor well motivated; for after having repealed the ancient ordinance which expelled from the city (*de villâ*) the public women (*publicae meretrices*), and which confiscated all their goods, even to their cloak and *pélicon*, (*usque ad tunicam vel pelliceam*), he ordered the proprietors and tenants of the rue Chapon who had rented their houses to the ribaudes, to put these latter out at once and to have no dealing with them for the future, under pain of losing their rent for a year, in order, according to the edict, that these vile creatures might no longer continue to find lodgings in the said street, nor continue to hold their assemblies there (*quod ibidem sua lupanaria ulterius de cetero non teneant*); this for the honor of the Bishop and in the interests of respectable persons who dwelt in the neighborhood of this street, or even in the street itself, where traffic was no longer safe. The ordinance appears to attribute to the name of the street, Chapon, an origin which gives the lie to the most ancient titles (*saltem metu tene dictus vicus*). Sauval affirms that the public women resisted the orders of the King by resting upon their privileges which had been conferred by St. Louis, and by proving that the rue Chapon had been ceded to them as a place of asylum by Phillip-Augustus, before this street had been included within the environs of Paris. The bishops of Châlons well might plead the authority of the ordinance of Charles V in the attempt to disembarass themselves of their scandalous neighbors; they did not succeed, so much authority still adhered to the legislation of St. Louis, and so powerful was custom in the municipal administration. "The ribaudes won out," says Sauval, "and they did not leave the rue Chapon until 1565, when these asylums of public women at Paris were overthrown from top to bottom."

The ordinances of the kings, it is true, were no better executed when they endeavored to oppose the invasions of Prostitution in those streets of Paris on which this scourge had not been inflicted by right of antiquity. Once the public women had invaded a street or a quarter, they took root there and multiplied, so that it was impossible to drive them out, despite all the threats

of fine and prison. They possessed, it is to be seen, an invincible repugnance to those places which had been assigned to them, and which, undoubtedly, gave them a special brand of infamy; they preferred to dispose themselves to the rigors of the law, and to practice their trade in secret in streets where the eye of the police was not always upon them. In 1381, Charles VI invoked execution of the ordinances of St. Louis against those who rented their houses or lodgings to women of evil life in certain streets which they had taken possession of, but which were not included in their places of asylum. Charles VI addressed letters patent of the 3d of August to the provost of Paris, in which he charged him to execute the letter of the law; he unreasonably relied upon the ancient ordinances of St. Louis, which drove from the city and the fields (*tam de campis quam de villis*) the women of dissolute life, and which absolutely prohibited Prostitution; but by virtue of these ordinances, he demanded only the expulsion of prostitutes who had chosen a domicile in the rues Beaubourg, Geoffroy-l'Angevin, des Jongleurs, Simon-le-Franc, as well as in the environs of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre and the fontaine Maubuë. As in the edict of Charles V, the proprietors and tenants of these streets and squares, which it was desired to rid of their inconvenient guests, were directed not to enter into any rental contract with suspect women, under pain of having to pay a year's rent to the bailiff of the place or to the judge of the Châtelet. There is ground for believing that the provost of Paris was at first diligent in his endeavor to see that the demands of the King were obeyed; certain proprietors were fined and certain women were expelled and imprisoned; but despite the sergeants, Prostitution kept the new domain which it had conquered. All the streets, except the cloister of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre had been a part of the hamlet of Beaubourg, which Phillip-Augustus had joined to the city by surrounding it with walls; this Beaubourg, was then naturally occupied by ribaudes, who perpetuated themselves there by tradition. The fontaine Maubuë, surrounded by wretched hovels, was the center of this ribaudie, advertised well enough by the very name of this fountain (*Mau-*

*bué, malpropre*, ill-washed). The establishment of ribaudes in the neighborhood of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre in the Cité dated back to an antiquity still more remote, for we have given proof that the sorority of the Magdalen had its first seat in this parish; it was, then, quite natural for the *joyeuses commères* who composed this sorority to group themselves about the church of their patron and to look upon this quarter as the ancient fief of their corporation.

The provost of Paris, in publishing the letters patent of the 3d of August, 1381, destined to protect the respectability (*l'honneur*) of certain streets, might have recalled at the same time, that other streets had been especially devoted to Prostitution; but from fear of contradicting some ordinance of the king, such as the one which had endeavored to rehabilitate the rue Chapon, he avoided designating these streets; he forbade disrespectful women "to keep themselves, find lodgings or dwell in the good streets of Paris, but that they should take themselves and their goods out of the said good streets and go to dwell in bordeaux and in streets and places for them ordained, under pain of banishment. This advice, which Ducange has drawn from the *Livre Vert Nouveau* of the Châtelet, was silent regarding those places which the provost's office nominally assigned as the market place of debauchery; and so, the prostitutes took advantage of this silence to spread themselves through all the quarters of Paris, and to set up there a multitude of infamous places. The provost found need of explaining the ambiguous decree of 1381 by a new edict, more explicit, which Ducange, in his *Glossary* (on the word GYNAECEUM), reports under date of 1395 as taken from the *Livre Noir* of the Châtelet: "*Item*, all public women known as bordelières and of dissolute life at present dwelling in the notable streets of Paris are enjoined and comanded . . ., that they vacate them immediately after this present cry, and that they withdraw, and that they make their dwellings in the bordeaux and other public places for them ordained from antiquity, there to set up their little shops of sin aforesaid, that is to say, in the rues des l'Abreuvoir, de Matcon, de Glatigny, de Tiron, de Cour



Robert de Paris, Baillehoé, la rue Chapon and la rue Palée, under pain of being cast into prison and an arbitrary fine." This *cri*, or proclamation which was made to the sound of the trumpet by sworn criers in the public places of Paris, presents this singularity, that it displays no regard for the ordinance of the king relative to the rue Chapon; possibly, a decree of Parliament had suspended this latter ordinance. Among the places reputed infamous, one finds no longer the rue de Champ-Fleury, but one sees that it has been replaced by the rue Palée, which was afterwards named the rue de la Saint-Julien and later the rue de la Poterne or Fausse-Poterne, for the reason that it was but a little distance from there to the postern (*poterne*) Saint-Nicolas-Huidelon. This street, which runs into the rue Beaubourg, and which today is called the rue du Maure, contained a court of ribaldry called la Cour du More a name which we would connect with certain women who must have been Moors or Saracens, since the *taille* of 1292 describes them as *Morelles*. This was one of the principal resorts of Prostitution, since we do not endeavor to find this rue Palée, in the rue du Petit-Hurleur, where Geraud, Jaillot and Lebeuf have endeavored to place it. The great rue Palée (there were two of this name), was, in our opinion, the place of asylum for the women of the rue Beaubourg and the neighboring streets.

There were also in Paris a number of unauthorized bad houses; but it would appear that the provost neglected to concern himself with them up to the year 1365, when Charles IX included them in one general prohibition. But before this measure, we might cite two attempts at reform in the matter of streets, one of which belonged traditionally to Prostitution, while the other had been infected with it at a much later period. An ordinance of Charles VI, of the 14th of September, 1420, during the occupation of Paris by the English, renewed the ancient edicts prohibiting dissolute women from lodging elsewhere than in the rues de l'Abreuvoir-Mâcon, de Glatigny, de Tyron, la Cour Robert-de-Paris, Baillehoé, and the rue Palée, on pain of prison. (Dela-mare reads *rue Pavée* in the *Registre Noir* of the Châtelet, from which he copies this document.) But four years later, Charles

VI being dead, Henry VI, King of England, who called himself King of France, lent an ear to the supplications of the church wardens and parishioners of the Church of Saint-Merry, who demanded the suppression of the shameful franchises of the rue de Baillehoé, "in which place of Baillehoé," say the letters patent of Henry VI, dated in the month of April, 1424, and delivered at Paris in the council of the King," are to be found continually, women of dissolute life and common ones called bordelieres, who keep clapier and public bordel: which is a very unseemly thing and not convenient to the honor which should be paid to the Church and to every good Catholic; it is a bad example, vile and abominable, especially to notable folk, honorable and of good life." As a consequence, in order to satisfy the complainants and their wives, who were scandalized at the spectacle of such immodesties, the English King forbade "that there shall be hereafter any prostitute in the rue de Baillehoé, nor in the neighborhood of the church of Saint-Merry, seeing that there are in the city many other places ordained for them, and especially near to this place, such as the place which is called the Cour Robert, and elsewhere, further from the church, to which should retreat the said women, who are not inhabitants."

It was enjoined on the provost of Paris to execute this *irrevocable* decree, and to expel at once the fallen women who lodged in the rue Baillehoé. It is probable that this ordinance was no more effective than its predecessors, for the rue Baillehoé remained consecrated to vice. We remark, however, in the letters of Henry VI, that the tolerated places were *comme non habites*; whereas the proclamation of the provost of Paris, made *à cor et à cri* in 1395, orders prostitutes to *make their dwelling* in those same places, which had been assigned to them from *antiquity*. We conclude from these two documents, which are almost contemporaries, that legislation relative to women of evil life had changed on this point; that they had been forced to find lodgings in the very theatre of their excesses, and that they no longer possessed the liberty of concealing their domicile in all quarters, so long as they lived there respectably. Another result of the or-

dinance of Henry VI, was that, notwithstanding reiterated injunctions, the dissolute women refused to collect in the bordeaux and clapiers, which remained deserted and abandoned. A decree of Parliament of the 14th of July, 1480, cited by Sauval, shows us with what obstinacy this species of women fled the places which had been reserved for their dishonorable commerce, in order to hurl themselves like harpies upon the other streets, which they defiled with their debaucheries. This decree orders that women of indecent life be dislodged from the rue de Cannettes and from the other neighboring streets, and enjoins these women "to go dwell in the ancient bordeaux" (*Antiquites de Paris*, Volume III, page 652). We cannot doubt, from the terms of this decree, that the provost of Paris had recognized the necessity of identifying the lodgings of public women with the asylums of their immodesty, and that the tolerated places had become in this manner the permanent dwellings of these women, who in the beginning had only come there at certain hours of the day, and who never remained all night.

We must now seek to discover in the topography of old Paris those streets which had been conquered by vagabond Prostitution, and which yet the ordinances of the kings, the decrees of Parliament and the *amendments* of the provost do not nominally designate. These streets, where was practiced in secret the culpable industry of the putes, were sufficiently numerous, while the obscene names which they owed to popular malice marked them out for the reprobation of respectable folk, who avoided them with prudence. In addition to the courts of Miracles, which engulfed in the same mire robbers and prostitutes of the lowest class, there might readily have been found a score of streets quite as ill-famed as those which St. Louis had given over entirely to public debauchery. We have remarked above that these streets ordinarily neighbored a center of Prostitution. Thus, the rue Transnonain depended, so to speak, on the rue Chapon; the rue Bourg-l' Abbè on the rue du Hueleu; the rue Cocatrix on the rue Glatigny. From the earliest times, the ribaudes had chosen their residences near the place of their *assemblées*, in order that they

might be able to repair there at any hour without being exposed to hoots and the insults of the populace. The rue Bourg-l' Abbè, which had been opened beyond the walls of Phillip-Augustus, on the premises of the Abbey Saint-Martin-des-Champs, shared in the bad reputation of the street, or rather of the cul-de-sac de Hueleu, which formed the entrance of the present rue du Grand-Hurleur. Sauval, (Volume I, page 120), reports a proverbial locution which enables us to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants of this street: "There is the tribe of the rue Bourg-l'Abbè; they demand nothing but love and simplicity." As to the rue de Hueleu, exclusively reserved for Prostitution from its origin to our day, it did not owe its name, as the Abbé Lebeuf says, to a knight named Hugo Lupus (in old French, *Hue-Leu*, who lived in the twelfth century and who made many donations to the church of Saint Magloire, but rather to the hoots which accompanied those simple or credulous ones whom chance led into this infamous place. This etymology, conformable to the spirit which christened the streets of Paris, is confirmed by the name of *Innocents* which the street bore about the same period; it was also called the rue du Pet. It was afterward given the name of Grand-Hueleu, to distinguish it from the rue du Petit-Hueleu, its neighbor, which had been at first the Petite rue Palée, and which deserved to be compared later to the Hueleu with respect to its shameful destiny: "As soon as a man was seen entering one or the other of these streets," say the authors of the *Dictionnaire Historique de la Ville de Paris*, "one readily divined what led him there, and one said to the children; *Hue-le*, that is to say, cry after him, mock him!" However this may be, of all the bordeaux of Paris, that of Hueleu was the one which preserved the most horrible renown; it was the one which especially determined the severe measures of repression which Charles IX extended to all the bad houses of his capital. One might, with good authority, sustain the thesis that the children were in the habit of crying *au loup* and, by corruption, *houloulou*, when a man accosted a debauched woman in the street, or when one of these



poor wretches dared show herself in the light of day with the costume of her calling.

The streets which led to the rue Chapon were not any better populated than it. The rue Transnonain had long served as an excuse for gross word-plays on the part of the people, who called it sometimes Trousse-Nonain or Tasse-Nonain and sometimes Trotte-Putain and Tas-de-Putain. The rue Ferpillon, in which name some have thought to find that of one of its former inhabitants, was first called Serpillon, an old word which corresponds to *tarchon* (dishcloth). The rue de Montmorency, where the lords of Montmorency had formerly had a dwelling with considerable dependencies, was known under the name of Cour au Vilain, on account of a sort of court of Miracles which it contained. The majority of the streets situated beyond the walls or along the ramparts constructed by Phillip-Augustus had turned to free Prostitution, which there braved in peace the ordinances of the provosts and the policing of the sergeants of the Châtelet. Thus, the rue des Deux-Portes, the rue Beaurepaire, the rue Renard, the rue du Lion-Saint-Sauveur, and the rue Tireboudin belonged by right to prostitutes of the lowest degree. The rue des Deux-Portes, which took its name from the two gates, closed during the night, had inevitably become a place of debauchery, of which we have sufficient proof in the soubriquet of *Gratec* . . . , which it bore down to the fifteenth century. It is by this obscene name that it is designated in a list of the streets of Paris published by the Abbé Lebeuf from an ancient manuscript from the Abbey of Sainte-Geneviève (*Hist. de La Ville et du Diocèse de Paris*, Volume II, page 603). In the *Compte* of the domain of Paris for the year 1421 (Sauval, Volume III., page 273), the receiver of the city declares that he has received from Jean Jumault "the rents of a house, court and stables, as well as all that it includes, situated at Paris in the rue Gratec . . . , near Tirev . . . , where hangs the sign of the *Escu* of Burgundy, being a quit-rent of the king." The rue Tirev . . . , referred to in this *Compte*, preserved its infamous name down to the sixteenth century, when Queen Mary

Stuart, wife of Francis I, passing that way, demanded to know the name of that street of one of her officers, which led to a change of its primitive name. Whatever we may think of this anecdote, which Saint-Foix asserts he has borrowed from local tradition, the strange idea was conceived, in 1809, of inscribing the name of Mary Stuart on the signboard of the rue Tireboudin.

The names of streets, invented and corrupted by the people, who delighted in the most indecent equivocations, are in themselves almost sufficient to discover for us the traces of public and secret Prostitution in old Paris. Without leaving the new quarters which composed the Ville, and which spread out to the north of the Cité on the right bank of the Seine, on either side of the walls of Phillip-Augustus, we find in the old inventories, the rues de la Truanderie, du Puits-d' Amour, de Poilec . . . , de Merderel, de Putigneuse, de Pute y musse, etc. These names in themselves indicate the character of the streets which bore them. The Truanderie, the only one which has preserved its name through more than six centuries, offered an asylum not only to wandering prostitutes, but also to beggars, thieves, and vagabonds, in a word to *truands* (vagrants). The rue du Puits-d' Amour, which is now the rue de la Petite-Truanderie, had a celebrated well, of which we have already spoken and which was well known to amorous ladies: this well, the memory of which is bound up with a number of chronicles of love, existed in the center of a little place de l'Ariane, the primitive name of which appears to have been *Place de la Royne*, possibly named after a queen of ribaldry or of love, consecrated with the water of this well. The rue de Poilec . . . , which is still recognizable under its modern name of rue du Pélican, which a maladroit prudently metamorphosed into the rue Pourgée at the beginning of the revolution—this villainous street has never changed its occupation, and one still meets there with the same manners. The rue Merderel, Merderet or Merderiau, has been cleaned up somewhat since it was made into the rue Verderet, then Verdelet, but it still keeps to its old customs and Prostitution promenades there, as in the old days, in mud and filth. The rue *Puitigneuse*, in the Fau-

bourg Saint-Antoine, is at present the rue Geoffroy-Senier, the rue Pute-y-Musse (that is to say, a *girl hides there*) has taken on a respectable air in becoming the rue de Petit-Musc. Guillot indicates in his itinerary, another rue de Pute-y-Musse, or Pute-Musse, which the Abbé Lebeuf thinks he recognized in the rue Cloche-Perce or de la Cloche-Percée. There is no need to say that these streets, haunted by women of evil life and their immodest satellites, were remarkable, among other things, for their filth and stench; it is in this ignominious state that they appeared to us still in the middle of the seventeenth century, when the *commissaires* made an inquiry of public health in the streets of the Capital and established in the majority of those occupied by the bordelierés, the presence of infectious sewers which poisoned the air and of hideous hags who afflicted the gaze as much as they did the sense of smell. Prostitution, as one may judge from this, did not pique itself on the delicacy of its sensual researches, in which it was later inspired by the example of a gallant and voluptuous court.

### CHAPTER XIII

WE HAVE seen that the provost of Paris, by his ordinance of 1360, had forbidden girls and women of evil life, under pain of confiscation and fine, to wear upon their robes or their hoods "any embroideries, boutonnieres of silver, white or gilded, or pearls, or mantles furred in grey." This ordinance, the most ancient that we know relative to the sumptuary policing of prostitutes,\* had certainly been preceded by some others which have not been preserved in the archives of the Châtelet of Paris. Phillip-Augustus was the first King to concern himself with luxury of habits, or rather the first who, under pretext of reforming costumes in the interest of the public good, endeavored to render costume subservient to the establishment of the social hierarchy, in accordance with birth, rank and fortune. We may, then, suppose that, from the time of the first regulation of Phillip-Augustus, concerning habits, stuffs and jewels, the prostitutes found themselves dispossessed of the privilege of being clad as *dames and châtelaines* (that is, as ladies); but if there remains to us but a memory of the sumptuary laws of Phillip-Augustus, those of Phillip the Handsome, which were undoubtedly but the repetition and confirmation of preceding ones, have not met with the same fate; and we may date from 1294 the legislation of the kings of France against *dissoluteness* and *superfluity* of vestments. In this ordinance of 1294, there is undoubtedly no question of public women and their *liveries*; but we may assume that they were not any more privileged than the bourgeois and the bourgeoisie, who might no longer wear either vair or grey or ermine or gold, or precious stones, or crowns of gold or silver, being required to relinquish (*se de livérer*) in the course of the year the furs and jewels which they had acquired prior to the

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note:.) But our author himself relates similar ordinances which had existed in Greece and Rome.



ordinance. The execution of such an ordinance was not an easy thing, and among the most obstinate cases of disobedience to be met with was that of the queens of ribaldry (*reines de ribaudie*), who did not fail to insist that an edict respecting the women of the bourgeoisie did not concern them, and that the King of France should not have attempted to dishonor them by forcing them to wear nothing but *robes worth 12 sols the ell*.

The ordinance of Phillip the Handsome was the point of departure for all ordinances of the same sort, which merely renewed and completed it, by adding certain prescriptions which varied with modes and usages. A number of these ordinances must have been published before the one of 1367, which, destined only for the inhabitants of Montpellier, especially to the women of that city, is full of minute details regarding the form of vestments and the quality of stuffs. It is hard not to believe that many sumptuary regulations, quite as detailed at least, had been applied to the women of Paris in the long space of time which elapsed between the first edict of 1294 and that of 1367, which only had the force of law in the city of Montpellier. We do not find, however, any but the proclamation of the provost of Paris, dated 1360, which we have cited, and of which common women were the object. There were, certainly, other similar proclamations, not counting the one which referred exclusively to gilded girdles, which tradition indicates to us in an indubitable manner, although the original text has not come down to us. This text, moreover, was but an explanatory paraphrase of an article in the ordinance of Phillip the Handsome. But there is ground for believing that the public women of Paris were not very docile with respect to the orders of the provost, and that they may even have revolted openly against the latter's agents, charged with the execution of the law; for we see, in the course of the fifteenth century, the prohibitions which the provost had addressed to his humble subjects and which the decree of Parliament did not fail to corroborate, reappearing on many occasions, and always with an excess of severity. By the ordinance of the 8th of January, 1415, wholly relative

to Prostitution, the provost once more forbade all dissolute women to be so bold as to wear, in Paris or elsewhere, gold or silver upon their robes and hoods, boutonnieres of silver, white or gilded, pearls, golden or gilded cinctures, habits furred in grey, vair, squirrel or other *respectable* furs or buckles of silver upon their slippers, under pain of confiscation and arbitrary fine. They were given eight days in which to abandon these ornaments; after which it was enjoined upon the sergeants who found an infraction to arrest the guilty parties in whatever place they might be found, except in the churches, and to lead them to prison in the Châtelet, in order that, their habits having been taken away and confiscated, they might be punished according to the exigencies of the case. This ordinance was renewed and cried to the sound of the trumpet in the streets and carrefours of Paris, in 1419, which goes to prove that it had not been any too well observed by the parties interested, and that the persistence of the rebels had discouraged the surveillance of the sergeants.

Parliament, despite civil war, pestilence and famine, which were then desolating the Capital and a number of provinces of the realm, regarded this question as sufficiently important, in so far as it related to girls and women of evil life, to render a decree on the 26th of June, 1420, by which certain further prohibitions were imposed upon the impure ones: "to wear robes with collars reversed and with a trailing train, nor any fur of any value whatsoever, gilded cinctures, kerchiefs for the head, nor boutonnieres in their hoods;" and this under pain of prison, of confiscation and arbitrary fine, after a delay of eight days given the guilty ones in which to conform to the law. The decree of Parliament met with no more obedience from the ribaudes than had the ordinance of the provost of Paris; and it was necessary for this latter, five years later, to read again his publications, which were frequently repeated with as little success. The *damoiselles* of prostitution did not care to renounce their toilet accessories and they constantly eluded the ordinance, by modifying some little thing in the inventions of fashion and by going the women of good life one step better in the matter of luxury.



It would appear that the seizure of forbidden jewels and habits still formed at this epoch, a sufficiently good *aubaine*, since the provost of Paris appropriates it as one of the revenues of his office; but Henry VI, King of England who was master of Paris in 1424, declined to permit this impure source of profits to be side-tracked from the coffers of the King, and by an ordinance dated in the month of May of that year, he enjoined the provost "that hereafter he shall not take or apply to his profit, the cinctures, jewels, habits, vestments or other adornments forbidden to lassies and amorous or dissolute women." (See the *Ordonn. des Rois* of the 3-d Race.)

A new degree of Parliament of the 17th of April, 1426, prohibited "the ornaments which damoiselles wear," trailing robes, reversed collars, cloth of scarlet in robes or in hoods, furs of petit-gris and other "rich furs" *soit en colets, poignets, porfils ou autrement*. The same decree forbade them also "to wear any boutonnières in their hoods, cinctures and tissue of silk or furs of gold or silver, which are the ornaments of women of honor." These reiterated decrees prove the obstinacy of the public women in their infraction of the ordinances; they could not persuade themselves that they should be subjected, like the *petites bourgeoises*, to a sumptuary legislation which became more and more rigorous as luxury increased, and as fashion incessantly tended to set up its frivolous reign in all classes of society. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries especially, the kings of France, who themselves set the example of an excessive prodigality in their toilet expenses, still forbade, under the severest penalties, everything which appeared to tend to a dissoluteness of vestments; they did not even permit the *gentilshommes* and the *dames* of their house the use of certain stuffs reserved for princes and princesses; they prohibited *toutes manières de gens* the use of certain embroideries, certain *passemens* in gold or silver, in velours and in silk; but the women of pleasure, who called themselves the queens and princesses of love, took no notice of these edicts and continued to wear, in their privileged streets, all these forbidden superfluities. It may be supposed that they did not

adventure into the respectable streets in such attire, which would have caused them to be remarked at once, and which would certainly have aroused against them the indignation of the passers-by. We have said that the people were by no means sympathetic to them, and that often as they passed by, they were insulted, mud thrown on them and they were even attacked.

It became necessary, from time to time, to satisfy the popular vindictiveness by punishing one of these brazen women who thus defied the laws. On such occasions, some of these poor wretches whom public opinion had denounced as professional ribaudes and who had been found wearing prohibited articles, were arrested in the open street. These arrests never affected the most guilty ones, who, being the best off, always had enough in their pockets to impair the eyesight of the sergeants, even though the latter had met them in all their *pompe*, as one would have remarked at that time; there were even those among them who paid these debonair sergeants a monthly or weekly revenue in order not to be disturbed, whatever might be their accoutrements and ornaments. Those who were led away to prison and who lost their goods had frequently but paltry trifles upon their bodies and did not even leave enough behind them in the Châtelet to pay the honorariums of the sergeants. Thus, Sauval and Delamare, have drawn from the *Comptes* of the domain of Paris a number of curious articles which show us the poverty of the ordinary victims of the Châtelet. The extract of the *Ordinaire de Paris*, in the chapter on *Forfaitures, Espaves et Aubaines*, for the year 1428, deserves to be reported as Sauval has it in his *Antiquités de Paris*: "Of the value and sale of a greatcoat of blue cloth, furred by the neck in *penne de gris*, in which Jehannette, widow of the late Pierre Michel, a *femme amoureuse*, was found clad and cinctured in a cincture upon tissue of black silk, buckle, *mordant* and eight studs of silver, weighing in all two ounces and a half; in which state she was found going into the city, beyond and above the ordinance and prohibition in this matter, and for which she was imprisoned and the said robe and cincture said to belong to the King, by confiscation, in pursuance of the said ordinance, and



was delivered *en plein marché* the 10th day of July, 1427; the said robe being of the price of 7 pounds, 12 Parisian sols, of which the sergeants who imprisoned her had the fourth for themselves; for the surplus, etc.—“Of the value of another cincture on an old tissue of black silk, on which there were *platine* and eight studs of silver, buckle and *mordant* of white steel, found in the possession of Jehannette la Neufville, for this imprisoned,” etc.—Of the value of another cincture adorned with buckle and *mordant* upon a tissue of black silk with eight studs of silver, and a collar of *penne de gris*, found in the possession of Jehannette la Fleurie,\* called la Poissonnière (the Fishmonger), for this imprisoned,” etc.

We remark, in this extract, a number of circumstances interesting as details of manners. They arrested and imprisoned only those women who were found upon the public highway with habits which they ought not to wear; from which it resulted that the latter were free to clothe themselves as they pleased in the interior of their houses, and even within the confines of those places devoted to the exercise of their scandalous trade. The *femmes amoureuses*, whom the police of the Châtelet did not hold to any preliminary declaration, and who in this manner evaded the ignominy of their state, might, by their birth and civil status, keep up bourgeois appearances and hide their true profession until an unfortunate mischance would occur to betray the secret of their shameful existence. Thus, Jehannette, widow of Pierre Michel, possessed no descriptive name which would cause us to recognize the scandalousness of her conduct; Jehannette la Neufville bore a name notable among the good bourgeois of Paris; as to Jehannette la Fleurie, or la Poissonniere, she had two soubriquets, and the last appeared to indicate that she devoted her attention alternately to Prostitution and to the sale of fish. We have, moreover, in a preceding chapter determined the point that the actual quarter where the rues Poissonniere and Montergueil crossed each other, was entirely occupied by the inhabitants

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\*Reminiscence of the “flowery” costume of classic prostitutes?

of the courts of Miracles and by the clientele of foreign debauchery. We shall add that the fish merchants, who had need to be present when the tide came in, found lodgings first on the road called *Val Larroneux*, which became then *le chemin et rue des Poissonniers* and *des Poissonnières*. We may divine all the motives which led to the nickname of *Poissonnière* being given to an amorous woman who frequented the fish market and who was surrounded by fish merchants. The name of *Jehannette* was not, as M. Rabutaux thinks, a common and generic designation for a daughter of joy. Let us not forget to remark also that those objects contrary to the ordinance, which had been found in the possession of amorous women were put in the same class with objects which had been lost upon the public highway, and which belonged to the Dominion when they had not been claimed in due time; after a delay of forty days, both classes of articles were sold *en plein marché*, and the product of the sale, which was small enough, was distributed between the king, the city and the sergeants, under the title of "strays" (*épaves*).

Sauval had not analyzed all the sales of this species, a record of which is to be found in the *Comptes* of the Ordinary of Paris, but he notes them, and it is to be seen that they were very rare, since Sauval mentions a number of years in which not a single one occurred, at least on the books of the provost's office. The *Compte* of 1446 contains this article: "Sale of a small cincture, buckle, *mordant* and four little studs of silver found in the possession of Guionne la Frogière, amorous woman, declared to belong to the King by confiscation, etc." It was especially on cinctures of silver or those ornamented with silver that the sergeants made war, perhaps by way of justifying the proverb. The fines due to the illegal wearing of these cinctures are registered in the *Comptes* of the years 1454, 1457, 1460, 1461 and 1464. After this last epoch, the prosecution appears to relent, and it may readily be believed that these cinctures have been put out of court. The extract from the chapter on the *Forfaitures* of 1457 is couched thus: "Many cinctures for the use of women, adorned with buckle, *mordant* and studs of silver, declared to belong to

the King, having been confiscated from a number of amorous women who wore the said cinctures in Paris against the ordinances in this matter." In the *Compte* of 1459 we come upon the inventory of the defrocking of two amorous women, who, each of them, bore a noble name, but who were quite differently clad. The first, by her dilapidated costume, spoke clearly enough of the misery or vice which had caused her fall, without the charms of her person being able to procure her the means of rehabilitating herself; she must, then, have been old and ugly in order to have been arrested in such attire: "A short robe of gray cloth upon stuff of brown silk, furred, in white fur, well worn, with old stockings, pieced by violet cloth, and a doublet of fustian in which Marguerite, wife of Pierre de Rains, had been found clad, declared to belong to the King, etc." We are quite surprised at encountering an amorous woman with doublet and stockings, as though she desired, to pass, at need, for a man. The second delinquent, who undoubtedly had been arrested upon leaving the church, as a result of popular denunciation, meant a better aubaine for the sergeants who led her to the Châtelet: "A cincture, adorned with a buckle, *mordant*, and studs of gilded silver, weighing two ounces and a half, with a *surceinct* (very large double cincture), also adorned with a buckle, *mordant*, and studs of gilded silver, a *Pater noster* (rosary) of coral, and an *Agnus Dei* of silver and a *livre d'heures*, which, with a gilded clasp, and a collar of satin furred in *menu-vair*, have come to our sire the King, by confiscation from the damoiselle Laurence de Villers, amorous woman, constituted prisoner for the wearing of such, etc." Here indeed we have a noble damoiselle who is described as an *amorous woman*, and who leaves to the King the objects of luxury which she did not have the right to wear upon her person, even in a place of devotion. This Laurence de Villers knew how to read, since she went to church with a *livre d'heures*, which must have been an exception among the women of evil life. In the *Compte* of 1460, the fines for the wearing of habits and cinctures in contravention of the law appear to have been more numerous, but these fines, as always, are not of great profit to the

king, the city and the sergeants. Here we have "a robe of gray cloth turned back, doubled as a blanket, in which Jehanne la Paillarde (the lecheress), an amorous woman, had been found clad and for this imprisoned;" for the bourgeoisie ladies themselves did not have the right to double back their robes or to garnish them in stuff of silk. Here we have a "cincture belonging to Agnès la Petite, who, although she is married, is of dissolute life, and has been many times arrested, with which cincture she has been found girdled and wearing it throughout Paris." This last quotation proves, in accordance with the theory we have advanced, that married women frequently practiced the profession of prostitute. The wearing of cinctures being at this epoch the object of a special prosecution, we may assume that a particular ordinance had led to this redoubled prosecution, which led always to the imprisonment of the prostitutes who had been arrested for violation of the law.

Women of this sort were incorrigible, where their toilet was concerned; they had all, more or less, a passion for jewelry, and they did not fear exposing themselves to prison or a fine to satisfy this passion for wearing a gold or silver trinket or even one of silvered tin. It was not that they desired by doing so to disguise their dishonorable profession and to be confused with the dames and damoiselles of honor. They did not revolt against the spirit of the ordinances, the object of which was to remedy the confusion of social classes between "*men and women of all conditions, who*," says an ordinance of Henri II, "*by this means cannot be singled out or discerned one from another*." The professional ribaudes, on the contrary, did not care to pretend to pass for what they were not, but they took pleasure in adorning themselves and *bedizining themselves out*, in order to attract glances and to vie with one another in magnificance. Since necklaces, bracelets and rings, were forbidden them, they revenged themselves for this prohibition by wearing holy jewels, chaplets of goldsmith work, medals, crosses and blessed rings; but the sergeants were not all sufficiently devout to close their eyes on these pious infractions, and they would wait for the delinquents



at the doors of churches, to lead them away to the Châtelet amid the hoots of the populace. It would appear that Louis XI, who on his own account greatly abused the use of medals, chaplets and the *Agnus Dei*, had prescribed an excess of severity against amorous women found wearing these same objects; not only were the jewels, which their religious character failed to save from the law, confiscated for the profit of the King, but the woman who wore them was condemned to a fine. In 1463, Jehanneton du Buisson was condemned, "*in the amount of 15 sols 4 Parisian deniers*" (about 25 francs in our money) for the illegal wearing of two vermilion *patenostres*. Louis XI caused to be punished with an equal rigor those ribaudes who had been found wearing men's clothes in the streets of Paris; we read in the chapter on *Forfaitures et Espaves* of the Ordinary of Paris in 1471: "Of the sale of a black bolted robe, for the use of a man, a hat and a *cornette* (headdress), in which Jehanne la Thibaude was found clad and seized, and in this state led away prisoner to the Châtelet of Paris, the 21st of May last; declared acquired and confiscated for the King." We do not dare to hazard a conjecture on the subject of this masculine disguise, which seems to have had, at least sometimes, an indecent purpose in connection with the acts of Prostitution.

By the side of the ribaudes, there were always the courtiers of debauchery, who, despite the terrible threats of legislators, continued tranquilly enough to pursue their infamous commerce; they were rarely prosecuted and still more rarely brought to judgment and condemned. Ordinarily, when the complaints of their neighbors or their victims had made necessary a public demonstration of severity, they were arrested and imprisoned, but everything ended in a money settlement, in a confiscation of goods or in banishment. In many cases the guilty one went scot free after the payment of a heavy fine, which was soon made up by the fruits of his maquerellage. Those, male and female, who kept bordaux, and who rented the little shops of sin, who ruled over a clapier of public women, who lent the latter at usury, either silver or furniture or goods—those, in a word, who lived

at the expense of legal Prostitution, were tolerated, if not protected; and in their ignoble trade of middle-man was seen a salutary influence in the regulation of debauchery. The women devoted to this hideous employment had need of an authority which would prescribe for them a rule of conduct, and which would keep them under constant surveillance; they were not restrained, therefore, from having a ribaud for governor or a ribaude for governess. These chiefs of ribaldry generally assumed a decent name and a mask of honesty; sometimes they were porters, sometimes chambermaids, sometimes innkeepers, sometimes foreign merchants; but always, men or women, they were persons of advanced age, even of a respectable old age, of austere mien, of grave speech and solemn air, which did not prevent the worthy person in question, however, from being constantly exposed to such little misadventures as prison, the lash, the pillory and exile, in accordance with the traditions of the Roman law. The French law announced the penalty of death for "confessed pimps" (*maquereaux avérés*); but this penalty was almost never applied, although it remained as a bugbear in the criminal code. Otherwise, the opinion of juriconsults has not varied regarding a crime which did not meet with the same tolerance from the moral point of view that it did in the application of the law. "Macquereaux and macquerelles," says the celebrated Jossé de Damhoudère, in his *Pratique Judiciaire es Causes Criminelles*, which served as a formula for all the magistrates of the sixteenth century, "macquereaux and macquerelles, who aid prudent and honest women to stumble, are, by law, punished corporally, and, by custom, by banishment or other arbitrary punishment, according to the various countries and cities."

Ancient criminologists merely repeat themselves on this point and agree that the penalty has been left in the law as a useful precaution stopping the excesses of libertinism, by opposing to its most audacious agents a legal barrier. The learned Jean Duret, in his *Traité des Peines et Amendes* (edition of Lyons, 1583, in-8, fol. 105), is as explicit as J. de Damhoudère in this

regard: "Those who rent and take houses to practice maquereillage lose their right of property and are condemned to 10 pounds in gold by way of fine. In fact, they are commonly punished, according to the penalties ordained by law, capitally and by death." One might cite more than one example of capital punishment inflicted on the guilty of either sex, by reason of particular circumstances surrounding their particular crime. Thus, Duret adds this paragraph, which informs us in what cases the penalty of death was required against the instigators to debauchery: "For the father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, tutor or guardian who gives thus his daughter, relative or minor, or who through maquereillage induces them to adultery, death alone is sufficient penalty. Servants and nurses of such estate must lose their lives." Another juriconsult of the same epoch, Claude Lebrun de la Rochette, in his practical treatise entitled *Les Procez Civil et Criminel* (edition of 1647, in-4), devotes an entire chapter to establishing the different degrees of maquereillage, and he concludes that lechery (*paillardise*), daughter of idleness and the said maquereillage, produces fornication, adultery, rape, incest and sodomy. "Whether then," he says, "whether these execrable executioners of consciences keep the lecheresses whose curators they are, in their houses, or, by allurements, blandishments, promises and artifices, draw them there, or whether they there bring them men, they are in no wise dissimilar from those *qui proprio corpore quaestum faciunt*, as Ulpianus decides in the law *Palam. § Lenocinium, ff. De ritu nupt. l. athletas, § 1, ff. De his qui not. infam.*"

Claude Lebrun de la Rochette goes on to indicate the indulgence of the French tribunals in the matter of maquereillage: "And it was anciently," he says, "punished with the extreme penalty, if it was confessed that the maquereau was in the habit of suborning girls and women whom he dragged to perdition; whether they were induced by presents or persuasive words, and whether, by this means, he rendered them obedient to his will and to that Prostitution which he desired them to commit, in order to draw a gain from such turpitude. . . . Always, the

sovereign courts of the Parliament of this realm, and the inferior ones, punished them most mildly, contenting themselves with banishment or with fustigation in the streets of the cities where they kept their *courtages* and where they were apprehended." It is our opinion that this tolerance toward procurers was not extended to those who labored to corrupt youth and innocence, but only to the masters and mistresses of bad houses. These latter were distinguished thus from those vile and abominable tempters, who, at the prompting of devils, battered the breech of modesty and conspired against the honor of the feminine sex: "However well they may avoid divine punishment here," remarked the honest Lebrun de la Rochette, speaking of these corrupters, "they shall not avoid Divinity, which always pays the wicked with usury the wages of his wickedness." As to the seigneurs and dames of the bordeaux, they were accorded everywhere a tacit protection, and they were made use of as intermediary officers in the execution of police regulations. It was the old women who were by preference authorized to direct the establishment of debauchery, and who were qualified as *maquerelles publiques*. Ducange cites a document, dated 1350, which confirms this qualification: *In domo cujusdam maquerellae publicae in villa Valentianis*, etc. It is almost certain that the *maquerelles publiques* existed and practiced their trade under the tolerance of the municipal law.

The ordinances of the kings, the decrees of Parliament and the proclamations of the provost of Paris, had, however on many occasions, branded, prohibited and condemned maquerellage in general, without making any reservation, without admitting any mitigating circumstance. In an ordinance of 1367, analyzed by Delamare, the provost of Paris prohibits "all persons of either sex from acting as middle-men in directing women to make a sin of their bodies, under pain of being put in the pillory and being burned (that is to say, marked with a red hot iron), and afterwards chased out of the city." This ordinance, it may be seen, included without distinction those persons who administered a ribaudie, composed of *femmes folles de leur corps*. All the



ordinances relative to the location of houses touched indirectly on the question of maquerellage, and the shameful authors of this *vilainie* might not practice it under the character of proprietor or principal tenant. The provost's ordinance of the 8th of January, 1415, textually renewed in 1419, while wholly occupied with forbidding debauched women from locating their houses "in honest streets," also forbids "all persons to meddle with the furnishing of girls or women to make a sin of their bodies, under pain of being put in a pillory, marked with a hot iron and driven out of the city." Such was the most frequent punishment inflicted upon them when these "instruments of Satan," as Lebrun de la Rochette calls them, had given rise to some public scandal. They were condemned sometimes to be fustigated and to have their ears cut off; it would seem even that certain maquerelles were buried alive. These condemnations undoubtedly carried with them in the majority of cases the confiscation and the suppression and demolition of those dwellings which had been the theatres of the crime. Such at last is what we are permitted to suppose from this passage from the *Compte* or the ordinary of Paris for the year 1428: "From Nicolas Sandemer and Isabeau, his wife, from the sale of a place vacated where they used to have their houses, four bordeaux and edifices at present demolished, situated at Paris, in the Cité, in Glatigny, on the one hand, . . . and on the other hand, constituting the corner of an alley, by which one descends to the river Seine, on the coast near Grand-Pont." We know that, in accordance with a custom which goes back to the most remote antiquity, a house which had been defiled by a crime was razed and the site was left empty for a lapse of time determined by the sentence, as though to purify the cursed spot.\* We believe, moreover, that

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note:.) It is possible that superstition entered into this. See Camille Flammarion's "Haunted Houses" (D. Appleton and Company, 1924) for an exposition of legal recognitions of hauntings, resulting in invalidated leases. This superstition arising out of the crime of murder might easily be extended to include a repugnance against a house in which prostitution had been practiced.

(S. P.'s Note:.) As to haunted houses, I recall an interview with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in which he told me of an experience of his own in freeing a house of the ghost that haunted it.

a house in which there had been for a long time a bad place, was not occupied by honorable folk without being rebuilt.

We shall see, in the following chapter, devoted to assembling the scattered facts of Prostitution in different cities, that the chastisement inflicted on procurers, underwent certain variations according to country. Among the executions which took place at Paris, we do not find a single one in which there is question of a victim described as *maquereau*, but, on the other hand, the *maquerelles* are not lacking. Sauval informs us (Volume II, page 590), that a "*maquerelle* who swore villainously" (*maquerelle qui juroit vilainement*) in 1301, was put in the pillory "at the *échelle*" of Saint-Geneviève. There were in Paris from twenty to twenty-five special *justices* with an *échelle* where the *maquereaux* and the *maquerelles* might be lashed, pilloried and cropped.

The bishop of Paris himself, had his *échelle* in the *parvis* of Notre-Dame, and the judgments of the official, who performed the function of bailiff to the bishop, frequently involved dissolute women, which proves that Prostitution had not been entirely banished from episcopal jurisdiction. In 1399, the official of the Bishop of Paris, in order to punish a woman who had "received and given retreat to a number of men and women, married and marriageable, and had sent for them by certain messages," condemns her to be "pilloried, her hair burned, banished from the land of the said Bishop, and all her goods confiscated." (See the *Glossary* of Ducange and Carpentier on the word *CAPILLI*.) Another execution of the same sort took place in the *parvis*: A certain Isabelle, who had sold a young girl to a canon of the cathedral, was exposed to this *échelle* and there tormented and burned with a flaming torch; after which she was banished forever. But in 1357, this Isabelle obtained letters of remission from the King, probably through the canon, who does not appear to have been prosecuted by the secular arm of the law. The flaming torch, which figures in the punishment of this *courtière* of debauchery, served her, if we may employ an expression of the kitchen, to "sing" (*flamber*) the victim and

to burn whatever hair she had on her body. Executions of this sort drew more of an audience than all the others. In the *Compte* of the ordinary for the year 1416 (*Antiq. de Paris*, Volume III), we read that the sergeants of the Châtelet bought a dozen new *boulaies* (birch switches) to “part the people” (*faire serrer le peuple*) and “to assist at the justice which was done to maquerelles who were led through the streets of Paris, turned, burned and their ears cut off in the pillory.” We find, in the same *Comptes*, a number of maquerelles put in the pillory with a similar ceremonial and a similar employment of birch switches among the spectators. The pillory where the maquerelles were customarily exposed was the one des Halles, which had been constructed on the very site of the *Puits Lori* (that is to say, undoubtedly, *puits de l'oreile*, well of the ear). When the time for the executions came there was reared in front of this well a scaffolding surmounted by a turning cage, with openings through which the victims passed their heads and hands in order to remain thus exposed to the curious glances of the crowd, for one whole market day. The executioner who presided over this punishment was called upon to turn in succession to the four points of the compass the guilty ones whom he had put in the pillory, after having fulfilled the prescriptions of the sentence, cut off one or two ears, administered the lash, etc. Generally, the maquerelles who underwent this infamous punishment were assailed with insults, hoots, mud and ordure. All the pillories were not movable like the one of the Halles de Paris; there was frequently but an échelle, erected against the gibbet; the pilloried one, attached to the summit of the échelle, in a very inconvenient position, himself advertised to passers-by the nature of his crime, by means of the signboard, which he bore on his back, his breast, or even his forehead. Dubreul tells us that he remembers having seen in the parvis of Notre-Dame, under the jurisdiction of the Bishop and his official, a villainous priest who bore on his back this inscription: *Propter fornicationes* (on account of fornications).

The fustigation and exposition of maquernelles were, in all times, a divertissement for the people of Paris; a crowd always gathered to watch them pass and to accompany them to the pillory. All the public women and all the debauchees took a singular pleasure in viewing the punishment of these unworthy women, who frequently grew rich at the expense of their numerous victims. Executions of this sort, always accompanied by the same affluence and the same gaiety, took place rarely enough, however, on account of the scandal which they caused in the city. One might cite examples from the seventeenth century. Lebrun de la Rochette speaks, in his *Procez Criminel*, of the punishment of a celebrated maquernelle (*célèbre maquernelle*) of Paris, named la Dumoulin, who was first fustigated at the street corner, under the reign of Louis XIII, and later banished from the realm forever; but her ears were left intact. One might undoubtedly discover in the records of Parliament a large number of decrees and executions of the same sort; some of these executions probably provided a more tragic spectacle. Thus, in the *Comptes* of the provost of Paris in 1440, we must attribute to an act of maquereillage, reinforced by deaths and criminal exactions, this extract from the *Forfaitures*, reported by Sauval: "Of the sale of the movable goods of the late Jeannette la Bonne-Dalette and Marion Bonne-Coste, having been buried alive in accordance with the justice of Paris for their demerits, etc., the said goods having been distributed and rendered to a number of persons, as to them belonging, etc."

It was ordinarily in the *Marché aux Pourceaux*, on the Butte Saint-Roch that the burial of women condemned to be interred alive, took place, a punishment greatly in use until it was decided to hang them like men. The first one to be hanged at Paris was a wretch who practiced all the trades inherent in Prostitution; it was in 1449, according to the historians of the time of Charles VII that two male beggars and one female, "who followed the pardons and the fetes," as Sauval says, were hanged, a trio who had been convicted of all sorts of crimes. One of these rascals was hanged at the Porte Saint-Jacques; the other,



with his wife, at the Porte Saint-Denis; "although the two were husband and wife," adds Sauval, "nevertheless, they lived together as though they were not married;" which may be taken as signifying that the husband prostituted his wife, and that the latter winked at the turpitudes of her husband. Sauval adds certain curious details to this patibulary history: "Now, since in France no one had ever seen a woman hanged before, all Paris came running. She went to the gallows with her hair all down, clad in a long robe, and bound with a cord about her knees. Some said that she had demanded to be executed thus because it was the custom of the country. Others would have it that this was by order of the judges, in order that women might remember it longer." The gallows, nevertheless, was not from then on exclusively adopted as a punishment for beggar women (*gueuses*), for Sauval has extracted, from the *Comptes* of the provost in 1457, these two articles which perhaps refer to *maquerelles*: "A woman named Ermine Valencienne, condemned to be buried all alive under the gibbet of Paris (that is to say, at Montfaucon) for her demerits.—A woman named Louise, wife of Hugues Chaussier, buried in the same place, and they made for her a grave seven feet long for this purpose." The death penalty involved other methods of punishment in accordance with the good pleasure of the judge, who would sometimes command the expiation of a crime by fire or by water. Among the women who were burned alive at Paris, or tossed into the water and drowned under the Pont-au-Change, it may be supposed, without fear of mistake, that a number had defiled their bodies and engaged in detestable practices, which the jurisprudence of the Middle Ages included in the category of sins against nature: "As to women who corrupt each other, whom the ancients name *tribades*," says the austere author of the *Procez Criminel*, "there is no doubt that they commit among themselves a species of sodomy . . . and this crime is worthy of death, as M. Boyer remarks in his *Décisions*."

We shall not have recourse to the statements of Nicolas Boyer, author of the *Décisiones Burdigalenses*, in order to prove that

the parliaments and inferior tribunals were always pitiless with regard to women of evil life who appeared before them under the weight of a criminal accusation. We shall give the reasons for this severity by citing this passage from the book of Lebrun de la Rochette, which embodies in these terms the unanimous opinions of the legal tribe on the infamous auxiliaries to Prostitution: "As to maquereaux and mauquerelles, they are altogether insupportable as the enemies of decency, traitors of conjugal and virginal pudicity, assassins of the holy human society, betrayers of the legitimate succession of true heirs, brands of Hell, and true dragomans of the unclean spirit, who are never suffered in any well-regulated republic since they spread nothing but paganism or atheism, as we may see from the *Constitution* of Justinian, *novella* 14. Thus, all the jurisconsults and doctors have held that: *Lenocinium travius et majus est crimen adulterio quia adulter in se tantum et in unam foeminam peccat; leno autem peccat in se, et duos pariter peccare facit.*" And yet, one of the first codes written in French, the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, containing the customs of France, mingled with a literal translation of the *Digest*, pronounces nothing more than the pain of banishment and confiscation against these courtiers of debauchery: "Those who disloyally assemble in bordeaux must lose the right of the city and their goods are the King's (Book XVIII, Chapter 24)." This article on *paines* will be found to be completed by the following one, which orders fustigation before banishment: "The mauquerelles of women shall be fustigated from the city, and their goods shall be the King's.



## CHAPTER XIV

THE ordinance of Louis IX relating to Prostitution, was then, always the unique basis of jurisprudence on this head, a subject which the other kings of France appear barely to have dared to touch after the holy King, that sovereign who had not feared to lay a heavy hand upon it in order to restrict it within wise limits; but the legalists and the magistrates, in adopting the ordinance of 1254, or rather that of 1256, in altering sometimes the text and in interpreting it also in different manners, in accordance with the need of the case, added to it, as indispensable corollaries certain provisions of the Roman law which were in force in the tribunals, and which were more or less mingled with customs and traditions which were the last vestiges of the codes and customs of the Barbarians. It was these customs which produced an infinite variation in the forms assumed by legal Prostitution in each province, and even in each city. It would be necessary to review the particular history of these cities and these provinces; it would be necessary, above all, to examine attentively the local legislation in order to determine the bizarre forms attaching to this tolerance of Prostitution, and to the penalty which it inflected in certain cases. We can merely glean in a subject so abundant and so complex, the sources of which are so dispersed among a multitude of volumes which we have not the patience to leaf through, and which perhaps would offer us but a prodigious mass of useless information. We merely must conclude, from a rapid survey of our notes, that it would be impossible to establish, city by city, or even village by village, a veritable pornography of ancient France, based upon authentic texts.

Let us remark, once for all, that Prostitution never possessed a special title in the body of laws, ordinances, and customs; it



finds itself relegated under many heads, where it figures among heterogeneous facts which have nothing to do with it, and which indeed, are perfectly foreign to it. It is the same with the general customaries, where it does not appear at all, as though the modesty of jurisconsult had eliminated it by design. Thus, in the celebrated *Coutumes du Beauvoisis*, which were the principal source of French law for more than four centuries, one seeks in vain for a decision which has any relation to public debauchery. One might say that the savant Philippe de Beaumanoir had desired to banish it from his book even as he had wished to banish it from the Republic. The personal character of the jurisconsult, the austerity of his manners and the modesty of his language, were undoubtedly opposed to his admitting, in the formulary of the customs of his country, the scandalous chapter of Prostitution. The anonymous author of the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, edited at the same time, does not appear so reserved either as to things or as to words. He begins by paraphrasing the ordinance of St. Louis for the reformation of manners, and he translates into the patois of Orleans the article concerning Prostitution: "Certainly, the common and foolish women of the country and the city, shall be driven out; and the judge shall take their goods, or others, by his authority, down to their cloak or pélicon. And anyone who shall rent a house to a light or common woman or who shall receive bordeaus in his house, he shall be held to pay to the bailiff of the place, or to the provost, or to the judge, as much as the rent of the house is worth in a year." We see from this that the school of law at Orleans had given the force of law to the first ordinance of Louis IX, which had abolished Prostitution, and not to the second, which two years after had authorized it under a regime of tolerance.

By virtue of this fundamental principle, recorded in the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, we have seen, in the preceding chapter, what punishments were inflicted on the *maquerel de feme* and *cil qui fet desloyaus assemblée de bordelerie*. This latter was but an industrial receiving *bordiaus en sa meson*, and drawing from them an infamous lucre. The other was one who, through

maquerellage, sought to corrupt for his own profit, girls and women whom he seduced to vice. This latter procurer, was a good deal more guilty than the simple *bordeler*, who as such found himself on the same footing with the robber, with the *toleor* and the *tricheor*, and who remained branded with infamy under the description of *maurenomez* (Book III, Chapter 1). Among the *entremetteurs* and *entremetteuses* of the worst sort, the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet* does not, however, in basing itself upon the Roman law, which it incessantly invokes, draw attention to the ignominy of tavern keepers, male and female, who generally did not limit themselves to providing drinks for passers-by, but who offered them as well a *transom de chiere lie*, to make use of the expression which has been consecrated in such places as that. The ordinance of St. Louis, placed at the head of the *Livre de Jostice*, contains merely this article, which the translation of the anonymous author renders sufficiently obscure: "We are not forbidden to lodge in taverns, if there is no *estage* in that tavern." We may understand in various fashions this passage, from which we see that a tavern could in no case be transformed into a hostelry, and that it was composed simply of a shop without any dwelling annexed and without any *étages*, or upper floors, destined for sleeping purposes. A passage from the old translation of the *Digest* (*Ms. de la Bibl. Nation.*) confirms the poor opinion of tavern-keepers and especially of the *tavernières*, held by the French, as well as by the Romans: "His wife is a *tavernière* and she has in her tavern a light woman who abandons herself for gain; she should be taken for a *maquerelle* (old French, *houlière*). The ancient French law differs radically from the Roman law on all points which had been modified by Christianity; thus, although the *bordelier* is reputed a *maurenomez*, the woman of evil life does not share with him this mark of infamy, and this, by reason of evangelic charity, which always gives a woman sinner the opportunity to repent and to resume an honorable mode of life. It was not rare, then, in order to redeem a soul for God, for a good Christian to go seek a legitimate wife in a den of Prostitution. It is in relying on

a decretal of Clement III that the editor of the *Livre de Jostice et de Plet* may say: "It is established that all those who take *puteins* (*putains*) out of the bordel in order to take them for wife and who shall so take them shall enjoy a remission of all their sins. Note that this is a work of charity to call to the way of truth one who has wandered." He poses, however, a case of conscience with regard to a marriage of this sort, and in order to resolve it, he makes use of a decretal of Innocent III, entitled *Significasti*: "One who takes a *putain* and leaves his wife, he shall be excommunicated for it: when his wife is dead, he shall take her. It is asked if they may dwell together? And the answer is, that if he has not purchased the death of the wife, or if he has not affianced the *putain* while his wife was living, the man shall be absolved."

The *Livre de Jostice et de Plet*, in which the chapter on marriage is treated with an impudent liberty of expression, which we do not dare to reproduce, does not, however, accord any indulgence to wives who prostitute themselves, or to men who assist their Prostitution. These latter did not possess the right to testify in a court of justice: "The king may take, by an inquisition of the ill-renown, justice on those who keep the *bordeaux*." Those who practiced the same trade, or who kept taverns, were likewise incapacitated: "It is forbidden that the woman be a tavern keeper or a *bordelière*; and if she is, she shall be under no obligation." These two passages, which appear to contradict those which we have cited above, would seem to prove the existence, permitted, or tolerated, of certain *bordeaux*, kept or administered by certain men or women, who, like the Jews, consented to live under the permanent menace of the law, which they cajoled by means of secret contributions. Despite this tolerance, necessary to the public life of great cities, the police of manners was always subject to austere laws, calculated to repress, at need, excess and scandals. Thus fornication, though it ordinarily went wholly unpunished, had a penal article in the customary code: "The fornicator shall be chastised moderately with pain of body." It is quite certain that

the punishment did not often affect the fornicators, except in exceptional circumstances. As to the wife who separated from her husband for purposes of fornication, she lost her dowry. But rape, adultery and sodomy were rigorously punished by *common judgment*, that is to say, anyone might call down the punishment: "The law which the Emperor (the Emperor Justinian) made concerning *avotaries* (adulterers) is one of common judgments, by which not only those who banish all marriage are punished by the sword, but those who commit disloyal trickeries; and by this same law are punished the vices committed carnally with a virgin or a widow." The sodomites of the two sexes, were not, however, condemned to death, until after they had undergone two corporal condemnations for the same offense: "Those who are sodomites shall lose their c . . . and if they do it a second time, they shall lose the other member; and if they do it the third time, they shall be burned. The woman who does it shall at each time lose a member; and the third time, she shall be burned, and all their goods shall be the King's." Such were the penalties in connection with the policing of manners which were inflicted in the Duchy of Orleans.

This penalty, which the Justinian Code had furnished the French legislator, was to be found very nearly everywhere with the nuances of application which the local character of the inhabitants varied to an infinite degree. The provinces of the north were more indulgent in this respect than those of the midlands; Prostitution reigned there without constraint and manners, abandoned to their native instinct, had but to keep within certain limits fixed by a facile tolerance. Toulouse, Montpellier, Narbonne and other cities of Languedoc possessed an organization of public debauchery that was still more regular than the one that then existed at Paris. However, Charles of Anjou, Count of Provence, and King of the Two Sicilies, was forced, following the example of his brother, Louis IX, to expel legal prostitution from his States; he did not succeed any better than the King of France in this design, which was more pious than it was politic, and he was forced to renounce his war on the prostitutes, who paid no



attention to his ordinances. He fell back upon the *Lenocinium*, or *Lenoine*, which he looked upon with reason as the most dangerous element of Prostitution, and one which had escaped the most rigorous measures. In confirming the Customs of Provence, he ordered that all those who, as procurers, were engaged in corrupting or prostituting their wives or daughters should be expelled from his domains without process of law; and that if, ten days after the publication of this ordinance, any wretch was found who dared practice this impious *art*, the guilty one should be brought to justice and punished with corporal penalties, in addition to the confiscation of his goods, and banishment. Charles of Anjou also forbade all his officers to give asylum in their houses to any woman of evil life under pain of being deprived of their offices and incurring a fine of *cent livres couronnes* (see the *Biblioth. du Droit Francais*, by Bouchel, Vol. II, page 610). Languedoc, however, did not care to be reformed, like the neighboring provinces, where Prostitution was repressed by laws and customs which tended to destroy it entirely. The *Customary* of Bayonne, edited undoubtedly under the influence of the Spanish *Constitution*, prescribes the lash and banishment for maquereles; but in case they had broken their ban they were to be condemned to death (*Coutumier General*, Vol. IV, tit. 25). The *Customary* of Marseilles, was not less terrible in this attitude toward procurers, although the common women were tolerated in certain streets of this city, where the presence of so many strangers and sea-going folk made the free commerce of bad places indispensable. The ribaudes, who carried on their trade in the port of Marseilles, were required to abstain from wearing vestments or ornaments of scarlet color under pain of fine, and in case of failure to observe this regulation, they were to incur fustigation. We shall give, in the following chapters, the history of the obscene abbeys of Toulouse, of Montpellier and of Avignon.

Let us seek the traces of Prostitution in some other cities of Languedoc. At Narbonne, although the archiepiscopal seat, the consuls of the city possessed the privilege of reserving within the

jurisdiction of the viscount, one "warm street" (*rue chaude—carrería calida*), in which the officers of this lord had no right to execute justice, while the amorous women who inhabited this street under the auspices of the consular authorities had the right to carry on their impure commerce throughout the region, without being molested or disturbed by anyone (see the *Hist. Generale du Languedoc*, by Dom Vic and Dom Viassette, Vol. IV, page 509). At Palmiers, the residence of a bishop, the daughters of joy did not sojourn in the interior of the city; according to the *Customs* of Montfort, confirmed in 1212, these sinners could only open their *bordiaus* beyond the walls of the city and at a certain distance from the gates (see *Thes. nov. Anecd.*, published by Mertene, Vol. I, col. 837). At Rodez, which also had a bishop, Prostitution it seems nevertheless existed within the walls, for the Bishop of this city, who was named Pierre de Pleine-Chassaigne, in 1307, forbade the inhabitants to receive into their houses public women (*nec recipient in hospitiiis suis publicas meretrices*), and he also went on to regulate the *livery* of these women, in such a manner as to make it different from that of respectable women; he forbade prostitutes to wear capes, mantles, veils, and robes with a train; he desired that their robes should fall to the ankles only (see the regulations of the Lord Bishop of Rodez, in the *Documents Inédits.*, taken from the Mss. of the *Biblioth. Nation.* by Champollion Figeac, Vol. III, page 17). At Nîmes, where the bishop was also a temporal lord, Prostitution had been confided to a governess of women (*magistra*), who confirmed this immodest commerce and received her powers from the consuls to whom she paid the compliment of bringing at fixed intervals a present to celebrate her investiture, called the *osculum* or *osculage* (See the *Supplement* to the *Glossary* of Ducange, on the word OSCULUM). Beaucaire, which at least was not the seat of a bishop, and which drew to its celebrated fairs a multitude of foreign merchants, was hardly in a position to get along without a privileged bad house, which opened at the same time as the fair of Saint Magdalen, and which closed when the fair closed. This bad house

was placed under the supervision of a governess, who was called the *abbess*, and who only obtained this lucrative office under certain singular conditions. She was not permitted, for example, to accord hospitality for more than one night to transients who desired to lodge in her *hôtel*. In 1414 an abbess by the name of Marguerite received in her house one Anequin and was so well satisfied with him that she forgot her duty and kept him for six nights; she was accordingly accused of an infraction of the law and was forced to pay a fine of ten sols in the money of Tours to the Chatelain of Beaucaire. It is M. Rabutaux who has recorded this curious fact in his memoir on *Prostitution in Europe*; but he has neglected to tell us the source from which he obtained it. The revenues which Prostitution furnished the cities of Nîmes and Beaucaire had, undoubtedly, been very considerable when the fair of Beaucaire was better attended; but in the sixteenth century when the wars of Francis I and Charles V had prevented foreign merchants from coming to this renowned fair, the joyous abbey, which had formerly thrived on the generosity of these merchants, became almost deserted; for in the list of ordinary receipts for the year 1530, Antoine Boireau, receiver of the treasury of Nîmes and Beaucaire, enters but one sum of fifteen sols, for three years' rights over the two *abbeyes* in this locality (*de emolumento duorum hospitiorum in quibus fit lupunar*). In addition of these two ill-famed hostelries, leased to one Louis Clucher, there existed a third which did not provide any revenue for the city of Beaucaire, for the reason that it was almost always unoccupied (see the *Traité de la Police*, Vol. I, page 525).

There was not, perhaps, a single little city in Languedoc which did not possess, if not its abbey, at least its *light* women. Those of Bagnols, could not wear, without exposing themselves to punishments, chapels of flowers, veils, furs of ermine, open hoods adorned with buttons, etc. (See the *Supplement to the Glossary* of Ducange, on the word *Mulier levis*). Those of Saint Saturnin, had to close on fete days, ember days, and the eves of holy days; in 1414, Isabelle la Boulangère was condemned to a fine of ten

sols for having received, on Easter Day, a man named Georges, despite the fact that he was her recognized lover. (*Ibid.*, on the word *Meretricalis vestis*.) These Languedocian manners, which the heresy of the Albigenses or Canteres had not relaxed, spread to the neighboring provinces. The city of Bordeaux, which was distinguished among all by the severe watch it kept over manners, appears sometimes to have drowned the ribaudes and their incorrigible procurers, by *keelhauling* them. Ducange, on the word *Accabussare*, informs us that this punishment was in use at Bordeaux, where the lower class of people undoubtedly pronounced this sentence and directed its execution. The victim, male or female, was shut up in an iron cage, which was plunged into the sea, and which was not always drawn up before asphyxiation. Ducange says positively that the victims were drowned (*Subtus navim denuo submerguntur*). He adds that the same penalty was in use at Marseilles as a punishment for blasphemers when they did not have twelve deniers to save them from the *cabussa* or dip in salt water. They drank more than they liked to the hoots of the mob, which took a great pleasure in their grimaces. At Toulouse, a similar punishment awaited swearers, procurers, and sometimes, Lafaille says, "prostitute women who have broken the police regulations." Jousse, in his *Traité de la Justice Criminelle de France*, published in 1771, describes the *accabussade* as it was still practiced in his day to the great divertissement of connoisseurs. The unfortunate one who had been condemned for some deed of Prostitution was led to the town hall; the executioner bound her hands, attired her in a bonnet made of sugar loaf and adorned with feathers, and fastened upon her back a sign board which made known the nature of her crime. This inscription was ordinarily: *Maquerelle*. A railing and caviling throng accompanied the condemned, whose arrest was cried before her. She was thus led in procession to the bridge that crossed the Garonne; here she was received on a boat by the executioner and his assistants, who transported her to a rock situated in the middle of the river. There she was made to enter an iron cage, expressly built, which was then plunged



into the water three times. "She was left there for some time," says Jousse, "in such a manner, however, that she could not be suffocated; all of which made a spectacle which attracted the curiosity of almost all the inhabitants of this city." Afterwards, the poor woman, half drowned, was transferred, *dans le quartier de force*, to the almshouse, where she was forced to pass the rest of her days, at least until she obtained grace and promised not to return to her former trade. We recall having read that a similar treatment was inflicted on public women accused and convicted of having communicated a venereal malady to certain debauchees, who, acting as civil parties, sued the women who had infected them for the cost of their medical attention; but we are unable to say in what place or in what epoch such an ignominious ablution was inflicted on the dangerous enemies of public health.

Notwithstanding the ordinances of Charles of Anjou against Prostitution in general, Provence had never been entirely delivered from a scourge which the warm and petulant temperament of its inhabitants tended naturally to propagate, and which served as an obstacle to worse disorders of the passions and the senses. We can understand that legal Prostitution could not follow a regular and open course in a country in which Knighthood and poetry had idealized the relation of the two sexes, where the cult of woman had been in a manner free from all material soil, and where the Courts of Love, owing their birth to sentimental abstractions, seemed to have taken on themselves a task of slaying the man in the man and of annihilating the body to the profit of the soul. We have seen above, however, that Prostitution existed overtly at Marseilles for the sake of mariners and strangers, who had need of finding in a seaport the means of distracting them from the ennui of a long voyage. There were women of pleasure in the majority of the great cities; but they disguised their shameful profession under decent names and appearances; they were no less a butt to the constant prosecutions of the municipal police and the ecclesiastical authorities; they were arrested, imprisoned and fined under the most frivolous pretexts.

At Sisteron, for example, the subprovost of the city, by an odious excess of power, caused to be incarcerated the foreign women who came to settle in that episcopal town and who arrived there accompanied by their lovers (*cum eorum amicis*); this subprovost (*sous-viguier*) accused these women of debauchery without anything to support the accusation, and he forced them to pay to recover their liberty and to live in peace (*ut pecunias extorquatur eorundem vexaciones redimendo*). The inhabitants complained of these iniquitous extortions and, by letters dated the twentieth of April, 1380, Foulques d'Agoust seneschal of the counts of Provence and of Forcalquier, enjoined the subprovost not to torment the foreign women who came to reside in the city with their friends (*saltem cum amicis prædictis*) on condition that they live there respectably (*dum tamen vitam honestam teneant*). M. Edouard de La Plane, who reports this in his *Histoire de Sisteron* (Vol. I, page 527), informs us that the magistrates of Sisteron, undoubtedly to obviate the unpleasant disturbances which the sojourn of these foreign women had caused in the city, resolved to acquire at the expense of the Commune an hôtel, destined to receive the daughters of joy and to lodge them merely on their passage through the city. The acquisition of this hotel had been decided on in 1394, and ten years later it had not been achieved; it was not until 1424 that the amorous women found a refuge at Sisteron, without having to fear imprisonment or fine. Those who arrived by the Pas de Peipin were subjected, the same as the Jews, to a payment fixed at five sols, which went to the profit of the convent of the ladies of Saint-Claire. These religious had undoubtedly to expiate by their prayers the sins which vagabond Prostitution had brought within the walls of Sisteron, or at least within its territory; for the house of refuge for the ribaudes was not in the city. The establishment of this house at Sisteron appears to us to confirm everything which tradition has reported concerning an analogous establishment in the city of Avignon. We shall treat separately the question of historical archaeology, which deserves to be approached without preconceived ideas.

It is undeniable that Italian manners had become acclimated with the popes in the territory of the counts of Avignon; and the thesis might be sustained that this papal city had made no change in the habits of the Roman meretrices, in whom the red hats of the cardinals struck no fear. From Avignon to Lyons, Prostitution had but to ascend the Rhône; and this great city included too many inhabitants for the police to be other than tolerant in the matter of manners. Guillaume Paradin in his *Memoires de l'Histoire de Lyon* (addition of 1573 in-fol., Chap. 58), reports a municipal regulation of 1475, which recalls the ordinances of the provosts of Paris on the same subject. By this decree, the public women of Lyons were enjoined to abandon the *good and honorable* streets and to retire into two houses of asylum where they practiced their miserable trade under the surveillance of the consuls. Each of these houses had but a single door, so that the ribaudes who committed a crime in these places of debauchery might not be able to flee from the rear at the moment when someone cried for aid. This ordinance regulated still further the costume of dissolute women, who were forbidden, under pain of confiscation, to employ for their adornment robes trimmed in silver, furs of *penne gris* or *menu-vair*, *laitistes* or black or white *peau d'aigneaux*, excepting only a *pélicon* of black or white, and finally, the hoods of *good women*; they were required to wear under pain of prison and a fine of sixty sous, "continually, each one, on the left arm, from the sleeve of their robes, three fingers above the juncture of the elbow, a red aglet, hanging doubly down the length of the arm, half a foot." The mark (*ensigne*) of bad women was only seen in those cities where Prostitution was tolerated and *avowed*. Despite the complacencies of the law in favor of vice, the *lenoîne* or *la houllerie* did not share in the benefits of this tolerance; maqueraux or maquereelles were always without the rights of the common law. They were lashed, imprisoned, driven out and their goods confiscated. "Sometimes the procuress," says Muyart de Vouglans, "was mounted on an ass, her face turned toward the tail, with a straw hat and a sign board." She was promenaded thus through

the city amid the insults of the populace; then, after having been lashed by the executioner, she was expelled from the country or locked up in an almshouse. This is what happened at Lyons and Geneva, where the guilty one, "mitered,\* publicly lashed, perpetually banished under pain of her life," according to the author of the *Traité des Peines et Amendes*, drew with her in her punishment the accomplice of her crime who had loaned or rented her his house. This house being confiscated, the accomplice paid *d'abondant*, a fine of ten pounds in gold. Jean Duret, in complaining of the indulgence displayed in such legislation, gives us to understand that the death penalty was still applied in his time in certain cases. Those cities which did not possess stationary *ribaudes* contented themselves with those whom chance brought them and who ran about the country seeking fortune; they did not have permission to remain more than forty-eight hours in inhabited places, where they stopped with their ruffians. Generally, they lodged in the suburbs or beyond the walls, sometimes in an isolated *borde*, sometimes in a place of refuge reserved for them, and sometimes even in the open air, behind a hedge or among the wheat. An agreement entered into in 1513, following a lawsuit which divided the seigneur and the inhabitants of the Communes of La Roche, Clugny and Alencon (Drôme) forbade the inhabitants of these Communes to lodge in their houses for more than one night public *ribaudes* and their ruffians who were crossing the country: "that no person shall lodge public *ribaudes* in the said place more than one night, nor ruffians, under pain of five sous for each time." (See the *Doc. Histor. Inédits.*, published by Champollion-Figeac, Vol. IV, page 352.) This citation, which we might support with a number of similar ones establishes the existence of those vagabond prostitutes who went from city to city making a traffic of their bodies, and who possessed, ordinarily, as companions or as friends, *ribauds* whom they nourished with the ignoble product of their

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\*Cf. Aretino's *La Cortigiana*, Act II, Alvigia's description of her former mistress: ". . . and she might now be wearing the mitre which she wore three years ago on the day of St. Peter Martyr; and she would just as soon ride on the ass as on the cart; and she was not at all concerned with the paintings on the mitre, so the neighbors could not say she did it out of vain glory." Etc.



immodesty. These ribauds were often not without their value to their *ladies* and *mistresses* in protecting the latter against violences to which these unfortunate ones were constantly exposed on the part of the first comer. Nothing was more frequent than such craven acts of violence, which nearly always went unpunished. The laws, however, were not without weapons in this respect, and the violation of a woman of evil life has been put by the jurisconsults in the same class with the rape of a respectable woman. In the privileges which the Seigneur de Chaudieu granted in 1389, to the bourgeoisie of Eyrien, near Valence, privileges confirmed the same year by Charles VI, it is stated that whoever shall have violated a dissolute woman or any other belonging to a place of debauchery (*Si quis mulierum diffamatam aut aliam de lupanari violenter coegerit*) shall pay one hundred sous in fine. A portion of this fine returned by right to the person who had experienced the damage, which legislators looked upon less as an injury than as a theft accomplished with threats and violence. (*Ordonn. des Rois de France*, Vol. VII, page 316.)

If the legislator posed sometimes as the protector of dishonest women, who in their branded state were left at the mercy of all insults, he protected equally those who had to protect themselves against the conspiracies of those astute women and their vile aides. Thus, one of the most ordinary and one of the easiest speculations was to accuse of violence a man who had done nothing more than make an amiable bargain and take the goods which he thought he had purchased. The rich Lombards, Jewish\* or Italian bankers, in whose hands was concentrated all the moneyed commerce, were incessantly exposed to enterprises of this nature; a woman was introduced into their houses, as a servant or otherwise; then she would make a complaint and pretend to have been mishandled against her will; when this debauchee was asked to take an oath, she would not hesitate to do so on the Gospel; and the imprudent stranger never got

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\*Cf. Nana's advice to her daughter, Pippa, on the subject of Jews, Aretino's *I Ragionamenti*, First Day of the Second Part, my translation, pp. 118ff.

off with less than an enormous fine of which the woman and her accomplices shared the greater part. This manner of exploiting the delicate position of the Lombards had become so frequent at the end of the fourteenth century that the Lombards did not care to establish a bank in the cities of France, unless their honor and their purses were protected against the ambushes of Prostitution. As a consequence, we remark this cause, nearly identical, in the letters of the Kings, Charles V and Charles VI, who accord to the associations of the Lombards the privilege of opening a bank and of lending money in the cities of Troyes, Paris, Amiens, Nîmes, Laon, and Meaux: "Item, if any women reputed to be of evil life are within the houses of the said merchants, and if they say or maintain by their knavery, that they are or have been forced by the same merchants or any of them, that on this account, the said women shall not be heard, nor the said merchants nor any of them, for this account, be penalized in body or in goods." Thanks to this paragraph of privileges the Lombards had nothing more to fear of the malice of these women who they received into their houses and who had no other object than that of reporting that they had been violated by their patrons. This precautionary clause informs us, moreover that these Lombards, who were looked upon as strangers, dispensed with conforming to the ecclesiastical and civil ordinances which forbade honorable folk from lodging in their houses debauched women for more than one night. The sojourn of a prostitute in their dwelling had no unfavorable consequences for them, and they did not incur thereby prison or fine or blame.

All the ordinances relating to the banks or *comptoirs d'escompte* of Paris, Troyes, Amiens, Laon, Meaux, etc., indicate the frequent or habitual presence of amorous women in these different cities, and the attempts at seduction which were incessantly renewed against the Lombards and the Italians. These latter might, moreover, give themselves with impunity to all those disorderly practices which the law would have followed up and punished in the national subjects of the king. The sage

and virtuous Charles V says so clearly in the privileges which he accorded in 1366 to the Italian merchants established at Nîmes; these merchants might not be disturbed and punished in a case of simple fornication, at least so long as they were convicted of neither rape nor adultery (*nec pro lubrico carne aliquis eorum punietur*); it is, then, to be presumed that the license of manners which these strangers displayed exercised an influence over the moral state of the surrounding population, which became corrupted by their example, if not by actual contact with them; for they kept with them a cortège of dissolute and libertine women, who led a joyous life and who were mutually perverted. We shall not, however, attribute to their installation in the city of Troyes, in 1380, the establishment of those "little shops" (*bouticles*) which the "cloistered daughters of joy" (*filles de joie cloistrières*), or *common women* held from antiquity (*d'ancienneté*) in a number of places in this city, as we know from this article in a preceding document, cited by the continuators of Ducange under the word *Clausurae*: "Item, that all women of cloistered life, or common or defamed women, would blush at receiving the tithe of Prostitution; and he would shall keep their shops (*bouticles*) in the places for this ordained from antiquity in the said city." The cities which neighbored Paris, those, so to speak, which found themselves in the radius of the king's court, made it a point of honor in being the first to obey the royal ordinances and to imitate scrupulously the organization of the Parisian police, even as they imitated the manners, the modes, the customs and the jargon of the Capital. They did not lag behind so far as imitation in matters of debauchery was concerned, and to cite but one bizarre instance, we are inclined to believe that a *bon compagnon* of the province who had seen his Paris and who had found his amusement in the rues *Tirev . . .*, *Trousse-Putain* and others as indecent in name as in population, was also a canny frequenter of the rue *Pousse-Penil* at Issoudum and of the rue *Retrousse-Penil* at Blois and of all these streets *sans chef* which were devoted to legal Prostitution.

## CHAPTER XV

THE central provinces of France were those in which Prostitution encountered the fewest restraints and found the most favorable conditions. It was given free field so long as it submitted to local custom and held itself apart without causing any trouble or *contents*. Only scandal and open infractions of the law were punished in its case. It is to be remarked that these provinces were also those in which civilization had best succeeded in softening manners; if public debauchery lived there on good terms with the lords and the Communes, the gaiety and general character of the inhabitants naturally kept them from all those crimes and violences which libertinism too often brings in its wake. Prostitution had then, the right of the city in each town of the Champagne, of Touraine, Berry, Bourbonnais, Poitou and Orleans; it merely was under obligations, in each place where it paused or set up its residence, to pay the feudal revenues and to conform to the customs, which frequently were not written down in the *Customaries* of the country, but which tradition preserved from century to century. Among these revenues, there were some very singular ones, which it is hard for us to understand today, and which may never have had any good reason. Thus, Sauval has drawn from the Archives of the Chambre des Comptes a document of the year 1498, which indicates that the custom of Montlucon put married women who beat their husbands in the same class with prostitutes; but the two classes did not pay a homage of the same sort to the authorities of Montlucon. Every woman who had struck her husband was required to present to the *Châtelain* or to the *Châtelaine* a stool or a stick. Every prostitute who arrived in the country to carry on there her villainous commerce, had to pay, once for all, four deniers to the seigneur; and moreover, as a vassal,



she had to go publicly to the *pont du Château*, and there stoop and give vent to an indecent noise, which she did not take the care to stifle under her petticoats. Following is the Latin text of the *Adveu* of the land of Breuil, rendered by the most high, most noble and most puissant dame Marguerite de Montlucon on the 27th of September, 1498: "*Item in et super qualibet uxore maritum tuum verberante, unum tripodem. Item in et super filiâ communi, sexus videlicet viriles quoscumque cognoscente, de novo in villa Montislucii eveniente, quatuor denarios semel, aut unum bombum sive vulgariter PET, super pontem de castro Montislucii solvendum.*"

The commentators, who must put their noses into everything, and who prefer to put them into the most malodorous places, have not failed to beat the bush about this dirty revenue. Some have pretended that the *filles folles de leur corps* could not give the seigneur of Montlucon more than the price at which they were generally esteemed; they have compared to this indecent tax which the lord demanded of them a proverbial saying which was formerly in use regarding prostitutes: "*La velle ne vaut pas un pet* (She is not worth a poop)." Other archaeologists have remembered in this connection an explained passage in the books of *Pantagruel*, in which Rabelais shows us how poops give births to little men, while the *vesnes* or fizzles give birth to little women. Which gives us the two proverbs: Glorious as a poop, and shameful as a fizzle (*Glorieux comme un pet* and *Honteux comme une vesse*). It would be very easy to compile a large volume on the poop of the ribaudes of Montlucon. We prefer to close the discussion on this delicate subject by recalling that, in accordance with the customs of feudal law, homage and revenue depended on the sort of service which the vassal rendered to the lord or to his agents. The history of the fiefs is filled with clownish and facetious servitudes, among which Prostitution plays a strange part. In the aveux and censuses, made in 1376 and other years, by the seigneurs of Auge, of Souloire and of Bethisy in Normandy, the seigneur of Bethisy declares to his suzeraine, Blanche of France, widow of the Duke of Orleans, that the

public women who come to Bethisy or who dwell there must pay four Parisian deniers, and that this tax, which was formerly worth ten Parisian sols a year (being based upon the annual revenue of thirty ribaudes) no longer brought in more than five sols, "because so many of them no longer come," as Sauval says (Volume II, page 465). The seigneur of Souloire, declares in his turn, that all those women who pass by the *chaussée de l'étang* of Souloire must leave in the hands of the judge the sleeve of the right arm or four deniers or some *other thing*. In order to understand this *other thing*, we must open, at page 110, the *Réponses* of J. Boissel, Bordier and Joseph Constant on different questions relating to the *Customary of Poitou* (1659, in-fol.); the seigneur of Poizay, in the parish of Verrure, formally reserved, in 1469, the right of levying upon each amorous woman who arrived in the parish, the ordinary tax of four deniers, or of taking "her wares" (*ses denrées*), the obscene salary of these poor wretches being fixed at four deniers. It appears, moreover, that in a majority of fiefs, the seigneur had the right to this uniform tax of four deniers from each woman of evil life who entered his territory, and who announced her intention of living there by her industry. But frequently, the seigneur replace this pecuniary tax, by some ridiculous revenue, which would still preserve his feudal privileges. The King of France was less concerned with the origin of the revenues which fell into his coffers; for in 1283, according to a document contained in the *Glossary* of Ducange (on the word of *Putagium*, in the last edition) he still received the tribute of the ribaudes of Verneuil, at the rate of four deniers a head.

Prostitution, in these countries of the *langue d'oïl*, had not been given the seal of infamy which was imprinted on those who lived at its expense in the provinces of the *langue d'oc*. The *fabliaux* and the *romans* of the *trouvères* of Normandy, Champagne, Poitou and Tours are filled with details borrowed from the amorous life of common and debauched women. The jugglers, who were undoubtedly their companions and who frequently ran about the country with them, experienced no re-

pugnance in putting into their verses these joyous companions of their vagabond existence. M. Bourquelot, in his fine *Histoire de Provins* (Volume I, page 273), informs us that the light women of that city were celebrated for their charms and their voluptuousness. They dwelt in a number of streets, the indecent names of which bear witness to their own antiquity, and which were formerly "paved with prostitutes" (*pavées de ribaudes*) according to the local expression, which is still preserved, and which recalls the *Pavée-d'Andouilles* of Paris. The *Fabliau de Boivin de Provins* (*Ms. de la Bibl. Nation., Number 7218*) describes thus one of the indecent streets of the city:

*Porpensa soi que à Provins  
A la foire voudra aller,  
Et vint en la rue aus putains.*

These streets specially devoted to the domiciles of women of evil life bore witness, moreover, to the profound demarcation which separated prostitutes from the rest of the population, and which prevented their being confused with women of honor. These latter possessed neither the beauty nor the seductiveness of the immodest ones, but they were so jealous of their good renown that they held there was not a penalty heavy enough to punish a slander or calumny which dared to attack their reputation. They had, thus, obtained from the counts of Champagne support and protection in case one of them was injured by another and treated as a *pute in the presence of witnesses*. She who offered such an insult, without reason and without proof, was required to pay a fine of five sous, and to follow the procession *en chemise*, like the penitents, bearing a stone which was called the "stone of scandal" (*pierre du scandale*), while the woman who had been insulted marched behind her and pricked her rump with a needle. Following is the text of a charter, dated 1287, in which is related this bizarre custom, which Ducange does not commentate, drawing it from the *Archives* of the Champagne: "The woman who shall utter a villainy to

another, like that of putage, shall pay five sols, or shall bear the stone, wholly naked, in her chemise, at the procession, and the other shall prick her from behind, in the rump, with a needle, and if she utter any other shameful villainy, she shall pay three sols, and the men also."

It is evident that it was ordinarily the public women who were guilty of this sort of insult to decent women, and the law took up the defense of the latter, who were enjoined not to respond in the same fashion to these brazen ones. The *Customary* of Champagne deals particularly with this crime. The man or the woman who thus outraged a good woman owed her an apology (*l'écondit*), in addition to a fine of five sous, and, the *Customary* (Article 25) adds, "if it happens that the woman to whom the offense is offered has a husband, this fine shall be increased at the will of the seigneur to sixty sols." The *Customary* of the Cerny en Laonais and of la Fère, framed by Phillip-Augustus, authorized every good man who heard a decent woman being insulted by a woman of scandalous manners, to assume the office of advocate and to avenge the insult, by addressing to the one who gave it, two or three good blows of the fist (*colaphi*), provided he himself was not moved by an ancient enmity toward the one whom he maltreated thus in the name of public decency. The *Customary* of Beauvoisis does not specify the insults and "villainies" (*vilenies*) which are worth a fine of five sous for a *dilain* and ten sous for a *gentilhomme*; it merely states that the greatest misdeed (*méfait, après le cas de crime*) is to pretend in the presence of a married man that one had had carnal knowledge of his wife (*con a geu o sa feme carnelment*), and on this point, Philippe of Beaumanoir tells us that, under the reign of Philipp-Augustus, one man having said to another, "you are a cuckold (*coz*) and I am the one who have made you!" the one to whom this insult was addressed drew his knife and struck the other. Imprisoned and brought to judgment, he was acquitted by the King and his council, as having acted in legitimate self-defense. The women of evil life, then, as always, were prompt to offer an insult and capable of the most un-



worthy acts in intimidating good folk, who trembled at being compromised with them. One of their commonest tactics consisted in the odious advantage which they took of the state of the married woman, when they threatened the imprudent one who frequented them with a complaint in adultery, the victim being then obliged to purchase their silence. It was to practice these criminal maneuvers and to exploit for their own profit the remorse of libertines that they carefully concealed their married state and did not reveal it until they had committed a well-planned adultery. The formalities of the law not admitting the excuse of ignorance in such a crime, it was necessary for custom which had the force of law to extenuate, in such exceptional cases, the rigors of the common law. Hence this article from the *Franchises* of Pérouse en Berry, which dates back to the year 1260, and which is an emanation of seigniorial justice: "If a married woman come to Pérouse to commit *poutage*, the man who has no wife dependent upon him shall not be bounden to the seigneur."

The amorous women who, having the free use of their own bodies, did not possess a husband whom they could produce as a bugbear in a case of pretended adultery, would frequently indulge in a similar speculation by threatening with denunciation married men whom they had caused to fall into sin. There was one species of adultery which the feudal law punished more than another: a married man who had culpable relations with a public woman might, on that score, be accused and condemned. The authorities, undoubtedly, avoided applying this rigorous piece nature; but when there had been a complaint or denunciation, the judge was practically forced to prosecute the delinquent, who was happy if he got off with a fine, for the most frequent penalty in such a case, and the one which best satisfied the vindictive sentiments of the populace, was the fustigation of the two accomplices, who were forced to run naked through the city and to receive their chastisement at the hands of all the spectators, who became executioners in such a circumstance. We find, in this old custom, established, at least in principle, throughout France in the Middle Ages, a tradition deriving from the afflicted penalties

of ancient Rome regarding adulterers, courtesans and debauchees. The *Customs* of Alais, edited in the middle of the thirteenth century and published for the first time as a sequel to the *Olim* (1848, Vol. IV, p. 1484), formulated in these terms the penalty for adultery: "It is also provided that if any worthy man who has a woman or a woman who has a husband shall be taken in adultery, they both shall run naked through the city and shall be well beaten, and the woman shall run first." The two guilty ones, then, ran together; but the woman had first to undergo the blows of the rods. The same collection of the *Olim* affords us a number of applications of this race of the *battus*. In 1273, the Prior of the abbey of Charlieu caused a number of persons, who had been taken in adultery upon his premises, to run through the city and be beaten (*fecisset currere seu fustigare per villam*). The inhabitants of the city complained to the bailiff of Mâcon, asserting that the Prior had arrogated to himself a right which he did not possess from their city (*quod novam et inconseutam justitiam faciebat in villa*); and the bailiff proceeded to claim for himself this right of justice in the name of the King, but the Prior, resting upon the ancient privileges of his abbey, did not persist any the less in fustigating adulterers whom he might seize in the act. The seigniorial justices, whose powers were very confused, engaged in incessant disputes among themselves over questions of legal jurisdiction, especially questions pertaining to police and their manners. At Amiens, the Bishop maintained, in 1261, that he had jurisdiction over sodomites in the suburbs of the city of Amiens; the bourgeoisie of this city asserted, on the contrary, that this right had belonged to them since the establishment of their Commune; the debate having been submitted to the King's counsel, Louis IX ordered that the city be supported in its right to inflict corporal punishment on sodomites: *justiciandi corpora sodomiticorum* (see the *Olim*, Vol. I, p. 136). At Saint-Quentin, the Abbot and the monks, on the one hand, the mayor and the sheriffs on the other, fell into a dispute in 1304 over the right to exercise common justice in the suburbs of the city; the Abbot and his monks wished to arrest, expel and imprison the light women

(*fatuas mulieres*) who had invaded the vicinity of the abbey; the mayor and his sheriffs desired that these women should live in peace in the abbetian seizin, the king's counsel decided that the Abbot and his monks had the right to disembarass themselves of their indecent neighbors, but that the mayor and his sheriffs might, in their turn, arrest, expel and imprison the light women throughout the Commune (see the *Olim*, Vol.III, p. 151). There was probably an agreement between the parties which resulted in regulating the practice of Prostitution in the suburbs of Amiens.

These regulations were very nearly the same everywhere, for there was always the same object in view: to act against procurers, to confine debauchery to certain streets or certain places, and to brand prostitutes with infamy and prevent them from mingling with decent women. Jean de Bourgogne, Count of Nevers, by an ordinance of the 5th of March, 1481, enjoined all debauched women to wear upon the right sleeve a red or vermillion aglet; he forbade them to go through the city or the suburbs without this mark, under pain of prison, and he forbade them to go elsewhere than between the two fountains "which has been from all time their ordinary dwelling," forbidding them also to frequent the rubbing rooms of the city (*Archives de Nevers*, by Parmentier, 1842, Vol. I, p. 184). Infractions of these regulations were punished in many manners. Abbéville was distinguished by the singular pillory which had been invented expressly for public women who had let themselves be taken in a dereliction: it was a wooden horse, called the *chevalet*, erected upon the Place Saint-Pierre. After having been copiously lashed, they were placed upon this hobby horse, whose sharp-edged back did not provide them with a very comfortable mount. Finally, under certain grave circumstances, they were banished to the sound of a bell; and if one of them dared to break her ban and return to the city to traffic her body, one of her members was cut off and she was banished anew (*Hist. d'Abbéville*, by Louandre, 1845, Vol. II, pp. 213 and 286). The procurers convicted of the crime of maquerellage in the same city received a chastisement more ex-

emplary than elsewhere; they were promenaded, clad in mitres, in a tumbril-cart filled with ordure; they were then led to the pillory, where the executioner cut away and burned their hair; after which they were expelled forever, and in case of breaking ban, they were condemned to the pyre. In 1478, Belut Cantine of Abbéville, "for having endeavored to persuade Jehannette, daughter of Witace de Queux, to go with him into the company of one named Franqueville, man of arms in the garrison of that city, was led mitred in a cart through the streets, and his hair burned in the pillory, and this one was banished from the said city and suburbs *sur le feu* forever." The capital penalty, as we have said, was prescribed by law; but it was only executed in case the crime was repeated and aggravated "the punishment of the maquereaux( according to the privileges of the city of Gand," says J. de Damhoudère, "was banishment, and the maquerelles had their noses cut off; but they had no further use for their noses, after being banished, pilloried, and put in the cage." The learned author of the *Pratique Judiciaire és Causes Criminelles* adds this remarkable detail relative to the jurisprudence of Bruges in a similar matter: "I, who have been many years in the Council of the city of Bruges, have never seen corporal punishment inflicted on the maqueraux or maquerelles or adulterers, but have only seen them punished by banishment from the city or country by the pillory or *eschaffaut*, by fustigation, or other similar penalties."

This jurisprudence, which was that of the Parliament of Paris, came to be established more and more in all the parliaments of France; but local custom nearly always reserved the right of giving jurisprudence, and proceeded to wink at many crimes of this kind to the execution a different character, depending on the manners of the country. Sometimes a fine was a considerable one, as in the case of the Parliament of Rennes, which punished with a fine of one thousand pounds, in the money of Tours, the *vendries de poupées ou filleries*; sometimes the movable and immovable goods of the condemned were confiscated; sometimes the maquerelle was attired in a mitre or conical bonnet of green or



yellow paper; sometimes they put on her head a straw hat to indicate that her body was always waiting for a purchaser; sometimes she was marked with the letter M or the letter P, on her forehead, on the arm or on the rump; the condemned one was paraded on a mangy ass, upon a tumbril-cart, upon a hand cart or upon a hurdle; she was fustigated with rods, with leather thongs, with knotted cords, and with switches. This punishment, of whatever sort, was a popular fete, the people accompanying with hoots and insults the unfortunate one who had been turned over to them as a plaything. "It was especially in the repression of this sort of crimes," says Sabatier, in his *Historie de la Législation sur les Femmes Publiques et les Leux de Débauche*, "it was in such cases that our fathers sought to employ a defamatory rigor and punishment which offended at once the principles of humanity and that decency which they were endeavoring to avenge," but the people were eager to see this foot race of adulterers and to play their role by pursuing and beating the guilty parties; sometimes the people would go beyond the sentence of the judge by forcing those who had been taken in the act and who were regarded as popular prisoners to run wholly naked. In the majority of privileges, which the Communes obtained from their lords, they were careful to have included a confirmation of this right to punish adulterers, and it became necessary for the lords and the kings of France themselves to restrain this right in certain cases, by leaving always to the delinquents the right of redeeming themselves by means of a fine. In the *Privileges* of the city of Aiguesmortes, recognized by King John in 1350, this foot race of adulterers was admitted in principle, but it was provided that the guilty might avoid it by the payment of a contribution fixed by the magistrate. If the foot race did take place, the two runners were not fustigated; and the woman, although naked like her accomplice, was required to conceal her sex; *Sine fustigatione currant nudi, copertis pudendis mulierum*, says the ordinance of King John, who, out of the same feeling of modesty, forbade the placing of men in the same prison with women. (See the *Ordonn. des Rois de France*, Vol. I.) It frequently hap-

pened that the population of a city impatient for so indecent a spectacle, would accuse of adultery pairs of lovers who had been found in secluded places and would attempt to turn a simple though amorous conversation into a crime.\* It became, then, necessary for the law to explain clearly what constituted a crime of this sort. A misunderstanding was impossible in view of the minute details on this point offered by the code of customs, liberties and franchises accorded by the counts of Toulouse to the inhabitants of Moncuc and confirmed in all seriousness by Louis IX in his letters patent under date of the thirtieth of November, 1465: "If any man shall be found with a married woman in adultery, wholly alone and naked in bed, or in any other suspected place . . .," etc. (*Si omne mollierat era trobat per bayle ab femyna maridada en adultero tug sols nut e nuda en leg, o en outra loc sospechos, l'omme sobre la femyna, baychadas los bragas, o ce isera nut, o, sinon portara, la femyna nuda o sas vestimendas levadas tro a l'enbouilh. . . .*)

Normandy was, at all times, quite as well advanced as Paris in the matters of Prostitution. We have spoken of the bad house which the city of Rouen possessed in the second half of the twelfth century, and which the duke of Normandy, Henry II, king of England, had placed under the special supervision of one of his officers named Balderic. This personage bore the title of guardian of all the public women practicing their trade at Rouen (*Custos meretricum publice venalium in lupanar de Roth*), and he added to this bizarre title that of *maréchal du roi-duc* during his stay at Rouen, along with the functions of guard of the prison gate of the château, a post worth two sous a day in wages, with the pannage on the neighboring forests, etc. (*Glossary of Ducange on the word PANAGATOR*).

This bad house, which existed at Rouen from the time of the first dukes of Normandy, and which undoubtedly held its privileges from William the Conqueror, was probably the scene of

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note:) It is to be recalled with what indecent glee the rabble of these States witnessed the perversion of the Mann Act to cover just such innocent diversions.

Robert d'Arbrissel's preachings. We know that the pious founder of the Order of Fontevrault went there with bare feet, in the public places and at the street corners, to bring women sinners to repentance and penance (*ut fornicarias ac peccatrices ad medicamentum poenitentiae posset adducere*). "One day when he had come to Rouen," related the *Chronicle*, "he entered the lupanar and sat down at the fire to warm his feet. The courtezans surrounded him, believing that he had come there to commit sin (*fornicandi causâ*), but instead, he preached the words of life and promised the mercy of Christ. Then, she of the ribaudes, who was in charge of the others said to him: 'who are you, you who speak thus? Know, then, that it is twenty years since I entered this house in the service of sin (*ad perpetranda scelera*), and that there has never come here anyone who spoke of God and his mercy. If, however, I knew that these things were true. . . .' At that instant he led them out of the city, full of joy, to the desert, there having done penance, they passed from the devil to Christ."

The abbey of Fontevrault, which the pious Robert had founded, with the preferred purpose of receiving there lost women, did not, however, shelter him from the temptations of the Devil and the calumnies of the world. He submitted, it is said, to strange tests in the effort to vanquish the flesh, that flesh that tortured him and enchained him to the vanities of the world. He was accused of sharing the beds of his religious and of using them to warm himself in order to have afterward the glory of having conquered his senses. Geoffroy, Abbot of Vendôme, wrote to him a letter of reproach on this subject: *Feminarum quasdam, ut dicitur, nimis familiariter tecum habitare permittis, et cum ipsis etiam et inter ipsas noctu frequenter cubare non erubescis. Hoc si modo agis vel aliquando egisti, novum et inauditum sed infructuosum martyrii genus invenisti*. Robert boasted of having never succumbed to martyrdom of this new sort, and in a letter of Marbode, Bishop of Rennes, published by J. de la Mainferme in his *Clipeus Ordinis Nascentis Fonterbaldensis*, it is stated positively that the majority of the religious of Fontevrault became pregnant as a

result of the good works of their Abbot: *Taceo dejuventis, quas sine examine religionem professas, mutata veste, per diversas cellulas protinus inclusisti. Hujus igitur facti temeritatem miserabilis exitus probats aliae enim, urgente partu, fractis ergastulis, elapserunt, aliae in ipsis ergastulis pepererunt.* We see, from this curious passage, that house of the blessed Robert was not different from a bad house except in the scandalous fecundity of its inhabitants.

Each city of Normandy also had its lupanar, if not its gardenoble of amorous women, and it might be remarked, with every appearance of reason, that the maquereaux and the maquerelles who figure in the ancient Norman *Customaries* were baptized with these soubriquets on the banks of the Channel. There is no evidence, however, that the dukes of Normandy were as favorable to legal Prostitution as William IX, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitiers, who had established, or desired to establish, at Niort a house of debauchery on the plan of the monasteries of women. William of Malmesbury (see the *Hist. des Gaules*, Vol. XIII, p. 20) has reported this singular fact in his *Chronicle*, and he adds that, after having constructed the edifice destined to house this lubricious monastery, the Duke proposed to entrust the administration of it to the most famous prostitutes to be found in his States: *Apud Niort habitacula quaedam quasi monasteriola construens, abbatiam pellicum ibi positurum dilirabat, nuncupatus illam et illam quacumque femosioris prostibuli essent, abbatissam et priorem, coeteras vero officiales instituturum cantitans.* This Duke of Aquitaine, who was a gallant troubadour and unbridled libertine, must have been determined by reasons of policy, remarks M. Weiss, in *Biographie Universelle*, in his efforts to form such an establishment, which has since had its match in a number of cities of France. We do not know whether it was to explain this circumstance that William was cited by Pope Calixtus II to the council of Rheims, in 1129; but however this may be, the Duke did not mend his ways, but continued to sing of love and to set his subjects the example of a joyous life.



The women of pleasure of Normandy, Poitou and Anjou had done much, undoubtedly, to merit their renown; those of Angers lorded it over them all, as is proved by this proverbial saying which was current in the fifteenth century: "Angers low city and high bells, rich whores (*putains*) and poor scholars." The low people of Anjou had composed their own blazon: *Angevin, sac a vin; Angevine, sac a . . .* (the *Livre des Proverbes Français*, by le Roux de Linc, Vol. I, p. 203).

The proximity of Anjou and Poitou had not succeeded in perverting the chaste Brittany, where Prostitution never had other than a hidden and timid existence, which accident sometimes revealed to the good Breton souls. Thus, toward the end of the fourteenth century, in the inquiry opened for the canonization of Charles de Blois, a witness named Jean du Fournet, a man of arms of the parish of Saint-Jossé, in the diocese of Dol, related to the ecclesiastical commissioners how the holy Duke had converted a woman sinner. On the day of Holy Thursday, of the year 1357, Charles de Blois, going from the city of Dinan to the château of Leon, accompanied by Alain du Tenou, his treasurer, Godefroi de Pondelanc, his maître d'hôtel, the Chevalier Guillaume le Dardi and some other men of arms perceived a woman seated beside a road; he demanded what she was doing there, and she, rising, replied that she was gaining her bread by the sweat of her body (*quod panem suum isto modo, per publicationem suitorporis, lucrabatur*). The Duke, taking his treasurer to one side, ordered him to approach this woman and to interrogate as to the sort of trade she practiced, for the good seigneur had not understood the response of the poor creature, who trustfully avowed that she was at the service of public immodesty (*quod erat mulier publica*), and that misery had obliged her to take up this vile trade. The Duke, hearing this, told the poor wretch that she should at least abstain from sin of this sort during Holy Week. She replied that if she had twenty sous, she would abstain right enough until the end of the month. Charles de Blois put his hands in his purse, which was not any too plentifully supplied, (*modicam bursam suam*), and drew from it forty sous,

which he offered to this woman. She promised, in receiving them, to go twenty days without committing the sin of fornication. Godefroi de Pondelanc wanted her to take a vow to do this penance for forty days; but the Duke would not permit her to expose herself to perjury, and he left her with the exhortation to persevere in the right path. This prostitute, who was called Jehanne du Pont, kept her promise and did not forget the counsels of Charles de Blois. She renounced forever her dissolute life, and, with her forty sous, which furnished her a small dowry, she espoused a lad of the country, son of Mathieu Rouce de Pludilhan and did not fall any more into sin (*Hist. de Brethene*, by Lobineau, Vol. II, p. 551). We might deduce from this adventure that Jehanne du Pont, as a "woman of the fields and hedges" (*femme de champs et de haies*) did not earn more than one or two sous a day as she waited for customers along the road, like the foreign prostitutes in Judea, and those whom the Holy Scriptures picture for us.

The eastern provinces, where French manners have been preserved in all their impurity, were at all times a scene of the greatest excesses of Prostitution. There were in Lorraine and Alsace, as elsewhere, customs and ordinances which punished excessive debauchery, especially when it affected the clergy, who gave themselves over to its transports; but in each city, public immodesty found protecting institutions, if it is permissible to employ this expression in describing the organization of vice from the point of view of the police. M. Rabutaux, after having described the state of Prostitution in the midland countries, "where we see," he says, "without astonishment the natural consequences of furious passions," is astonished at not encountering more severe manners in the countries in the north. "If we turn our attention," he adds, "to those countries which a less ardent sky ought to dispose to a conduct more grave, we find there the same excesses, of, it may be, a still grosser character." The explanation of this fact must, in our opinion, be found in an historic cause and in certain conditions of political economy. On one hand, the Austrasian population had preserved its habits of ferocious luxury,

and, on the other hand, national legislation had done nothing to overcome these brutal appetites, which the abuse of fermented beverages of beer or *cervoise* hydromel and the wines of the Rhine had exalted to the point of delirium. Prostitution is, then, admitted as a law of necessity, in order to safeguard the honor of married women, who, in spite of it, are not always preserved from the outrages of masculine sensuality. The legislator seeks and condemns merely those misdeeds which flow from this impure source. Thus *maquerellage* is punished more rigorously than rape; but every girl and every woman has, none the less, the right to sell herself by submitting always to the various formalities of the municipal police. The law against them was not severe except in cases where they prostituted themselves with churchmen. Charles III, Duke of Lorraine, sums up the ancient jurisprudence in his ordinance of the twelfth of January, 1583, which condemns to the last "those women and girls notoriously branded and defamed with lechery, who haunt the houses of the clergy, where they retire to commit abuses." As to the regulations of legal Prostitution, they did not differ, although wider in application and less austere, from those which reasons of utility, morality and prudence had caused to be adopted in the great cities of the midlands. The women of evil life found themselves, as it were, cut off from society; they inhabited infamous quarters and streets; they might not practice their ignoble trade elsewhere; they wore a special costume or a distinctive mark in the manner of the Jews; they paid a revenue to the treasury; and they governed themselves in accordance with the statutes of a regular association, analogous to those of the trade bodies.

At Strassburg, municipal ordinances of 1409 and 1430 provided that public women should be relegated to the Bieckergass, Klappergass, and Greibangass Strassen and behind the walls of the city, where women of this sort had dwelt from all time, according to the ordinances, which were renewed many times in the course of the fifteenth century. (See, in the *Mém. de L'instut, Sciences Morales et Politiques*, the observations of M. Koch, on the origin of the venereal malady and on its introduction into Al-

sace and at Strassburg.) As a matter of fact, there have been preserved in the *Archives* of this city, the regulations and statutes enacted, on the twenty-fourth of March, 1455, by the magistrate of Strassburg, with reference to the community of women established in the street and house known as *kicken-gaff*. These regulations, composed of thirteen articles, include the police measures to which the places of debauchery were subject (*Dict. des Sciences Medicales*, Vol. XLV, article on PROSTITUTION). These bad houses became so multiplied that, toward the end of the fifteenth century, the public officers charged with their surveillance and with collecting the lustral tax, counted more than fifty-seven in six different streets; in addition, the single street known as Undengassen included nineteen of these houses of lechery; there was also a *horde* in the little street opposite the Ketener and a number behind the house called *Schnabelburg*. Koch had under his eyes the police report which prove that there were a hundred authorized *bordeaux* in the archiepiscopal city of Strassburg. The entrepreneurs of these Alsatian harems would send their agents and their couriers into foreign countries to procure beautiful young girls who would hire their bodies out by contract, and who, once prisoners in the *calpiers* (*klapper*) of Strassburg, would find themselves reduced to a condition worse than slavery.\* Finally, towards the beginning of the sixteenth century, the public houses were no longer sufficient to hold all the women of dissolute life who flowed into them from all sides, and who, having no other lodgings, invaded the bell-towers of the cathedral and the other churches. "As to the 'swallows' (*hirondelles*) or *ribaudes* of the cathedral," says an ordinance of 1521, "the magistrate decrees that they shall be permitted to remain there another fifteen days; after which they shall be forced to take an oath to abandon the cathedral and other churches and holy places. It shall be enjoined on those who would persist in libertinism to retire to the Rieberg (beyond the city) and into the other places which have been assigned to them." Fifteen years

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\*Our "white slave" traffic again.



later, thanks to Protestantism, which, according to the remarkable expression of which M. Rabutaux makes use, "renders some dignity to private life," there were no longer in all Strassburg more than two houses of Prostitution. At this epoch, the debauched women still wore the *sign* which the magistrate of Strassburg had imposed on them in 1388: it was a high conical *bonnet*, black and white, worn under their veils; it was of almost the same color as that *hennin* which Isabeau of Bavaria introduced into the court of France to the great scandal of the *prudes femmes*. (See the *Observat.* of M. Koch, cited above.)

Prostitution reigned with no less fury in the province of Mezin than it did in Alsace, and at Metz as at Strassburg, the monks and ecclesiastics took part in the most scandalous disorders. In an *atour*, or ordinance of the magistrates, of the year 1332, the clergy were forbidden "to go by night or day into common places, to marriage feasts and dances and other places which are not good to say." This *atour* indicates "the great dissoluteness which there is among the monks of Gorze, of Saint-Arnoul, of Saint-Clement, of Saint-Martin, etc.," who were in the habit of running about the streets during the night, knocking at the doors of houses, frequenting taverns and infamous places. This state of things could only have grown worse toward the end of the sixteenth century, and the chronicler Philippe de Vigneulles attributes these monstrous excesses to the affluence that came from the spoils of war: "There are to be seen in the streets," he says, "nothing but ribaudes, and since things are so infamous," severe *huchements* (proclamations) were put up on the rock known as the *Bordelesse*, in the presence of all the *Treze* (magistrates of the city). This rock of the *Bordelesse* must have been the pillory, or the *justice* of Metz. One of these *huchements* under date of July 6, 1493, is reported in the unpublished *Chronicle* of Phillipe de Vigneulles: "That all married women living apart from their husbands and girls of evil life shall go to the bordelaux, as in Anglemur (a cul-de-sac near the walls of the city), and into the other customary streets where such women and girls are required to dwell in the lower town, if they do not desire to return and to

live as good women with their husbands, and that none of Metz shall support them or rent them houses in the good streets, under pain of a fine of forty sols. And that the said women and girls shall not appear at any feasts, nor at any dances, which shall take place in the city, and that none shall take them to a dance under pain of a fine of ten sols."

Metz had many streets devoted, from a very remote period, to the dwellings of dissolute women, and such of these streets as did not disappear with the old town kept their primitive character. Near the cul-de-sac of Anglemur, which was the principal foyer of urban debauchery, was the rue des Bordeaux or du Bordel, which has since been closed, but which formerly abutted on the walls, parallel to the rue Stancul. This latter, which mounts the eastern declivity of the hill of Sainte-Croix, where was situated the palace of the kings of Austrasia, is narrow, somber, and malodorous, like all streets of its sort. The women of evil life here would engage themselves, in return for a certain "pension" fixed by contract, to serve with their bodies in these houses of tolerance, which the ribaudes rented under the *mainburnie* of the magistrates. And so, every unmarried girl who created a scandal through her depraved manners, was led away shamefully to the bourdel and there given over to the ribaude, who proceeded to traffic in her body, if someone did not pay a good ransom for her, a sum greater than the ribaudes expected to receive through the sale of this new piece of merchandise. Philippe de Vigneulles relates, on this subject, a touching story which he dates from 1491: A garse, going to the cathedral on Palm Sunday, met her *ami par amour* who took her with him to his house, in place of accompanying her to mass. The thing became known, and the magistrates summoned the author of the scandal; he was condemned merely to a fine of forty sous; but the girl, who was looked upon as being "full of ill will" (*rempliè de malvaise volonté*) was shut up in a house of debauchery. "Her friend followed her there," says the naïve chronicler, "and redeemed her from the hands of the ribaudes, by paying fifteen sols, and led her back to his *hostel*, and sold his goods, and went with her to

dwelt elsewhere.” Another chronicler, the Dean of Saint-Thiebaut, furnishes us with a precise bit of information respecting the wages of Prostitution, in a time, it is true, when the abundance of common women did not compensate for the lack of wheat. In 1420, one might have four women for the price of an egg, M. Emile Bégin tells us (*Histoire des Science dans le Pays Messin*, page 311) upon the authority of this chronicler: “for an egg cost a gross and a woman four deniers; and the women had the better of the bargain.” Maquerellage, nevertheless, constituted a business that was by no means unlucrative, and despite the dangers of criminal prosecution, despite the example of frequent chastisements afflicted on maquerelles, there were not lacking shameful women who lived by a traffic in their own children. “One woman had her ears cut off,” reports Philippe de Vigneulles (under date of 1480), “for the reason that she had committed many thefts, and had also led a young girl which she had, who was her daughter, to the bourdel and there had put her to shame.” A century later, for the same offense, the woman would have undergone capital punishment.

The special history of all the cities of Lorraine and Alsace presents us with a multitude of analogous facts, which tend to demonstrate the unity of jurisprudence on the head of Prostitution. We shall merely report here two details relating to the cities of Saint-Dié and Montbéliard. In this last city, a ribaud, who was in the habit of running about the town in the costume of a woman (1539), was “bodily apprehended and put in the hands of the master of high justice, to be placed in a cage (*échelle*), with two distaffs, then lashed and driven forever out of the land of the Seigneur of Montbéliard.” It is probable that this ribaud made a sufficiently disgusting use of his feminine disguise. We have seen that at Paris ribaudes who descended to the street in men’s clothing were likewise arrested; but ordinarily, the authorities were content with confiscating the unnatural habits. At Saint-Dié, the women of evil life who dwelt in the rues Destord and Nozeville might boast of being very prolific, since four

neighboring villages, Pierpont, Sainte-Helène, Bult and Padoux called the *villes mâleuses* (the male cities), had been peopled by their male children, who there married and became the subjects of the chapter of the cathedral of Saint-Dié, the same as the impure inhabitants of the low streets of Destord and Nozeville. (See, in the *Arrêts de la Chambre Royale de Metz*, a census furnished to the Chamber on the 7th of January, 1681.)





## CHAPTER XVI

THERE were three cities in France in each of which the history of legal Prostitution might determine the existence of a place of debauchery established by virtue of royal privilege and carried on for the profit of the city. These three cities are: Avignon, Toulouse and Montpellier; in which we find, in the interest of good manners, an obscene *abbey*, administered by the municipal authorities as an establishment of public utility. We believe that the annals of these three establishments deserve to be recorded and compared in the same chapter, in order to bring to light the influence of the manners and customs of Italy on Provence and Languedoc in the Middle Ages.

“From all antiquity,” says an ordinance of Louis XI, which we have already cited, “it has been the custom in our country of Languedoc, and especially in the good cities of the said country, to establish a house and dwelling, without the said cities, for the habitation and residence of common women.” At Toulouse, as a matter of fact, in the time of the first counts, a house of debauchery had been opened at the expense of the city, which drew from it a large revenue, and which thereby assured the peace of respectable women; this *abbey* was situated in the *rue de Comenge*. The heresy of the Cathares, or the Albigenses, which did not permit carnal relations with any woman, probably contributed for a time to impairing the reign of Prostitution at Toulouse, and, to employ the fine expression of which M. Mignet makes use in analyzing the doctrines of these austere heretics (*Journal des Savants*, May, 1852), “the god of matter who ruled in the shady regions of defiled bodies” was powerless to defend his temple. An ordinance of the *Capitouls* of the year 1201 purified the *rue de Comenge* and transferred into the *Faubourg Saint-Cyprien* the impure establishment which dishonored it. This authorized bad house appeared to be too near the city

still; and it was later transferred beyond the walls, near the gate and quarter known as des Crozes (see the *Mem. de l'Hist. du Languedoc* of Catel and the *Hist. de Toulouse* by Lafaille). If the gates of this public house, which was called the *Grant-Abbaye*, and which contained not only the ribaudes of the city, but also those vagabond ones who had come to Toulouse out of caprice had been closed, the scholars of the University and the debauchees, or *goliards*, of the country would have revolted in order to preserve what they called their ancient privileges. The city and the University had, then, deliberately underwritten the installation of these *fillas communes* and shared, *bono jure et justo titulo*, as proprietors, the profits derived from this immodest exploitation. The prostitutes who dwelt, permanently or transiently, in the Grant-Abbaye were constrained to wear a white hood with white cords as the *sign* of their shameful profession. They found it hard to submit to this sumptuary regulation, which restrained them from dressing as they pleased (*se vêtir et aseigneur à leur plaisir*); for this hood of striking color did not go well with other colors which were in the mode, and the community of the Grant-Abbaye was always at odds on the question of toilets. The magistrates, however, were inflexible with regard to the observation of the ancient ordinances and rigorously punished any infraction of the rule regarding white hoods and cords.

In the month of December, 1389, King Charles VI, visiting the good cities of his realm, made a triumphal entry into the capital of Languedoc, where he was received with pomp, and where he resided a number of days. The entire population took part in the fetes accompanying his entrance, and the recluses of the Grant-Abbaye went to meet the King with presents of comfitures, wines and flowers, and to present to him a petition; they demanded, in honor of the joyous event, that they be freed of the "insults, vituperations and damages" (*injures, vitupères, et dommages*) attaching to the white hoods, which an old ordinance had assigned their sorority. It appeared that the cry, *Au chaperon blanc!* in the streets of Toulouse would bring from the houses and the shops a throng of children, who would pursue

with hoots the unhappy coiffure, hurling at it mud and stones. The women of the Grant-Abbaye complained that the ordinances *concerning their robes and other vestments* had been made by the capitouls without the *grace and license* of the King; they therefore conjured this Prince to relieve them from such a servitude. The affair was brought before the council of requests and debated in the presence of the Bishop of Noyon, the Viscount of Melun and the Messieurs Enguerrand Deudin and Jean d'Estouteville. Charles VI, who had not yet gone insane, took a holy paternal interest in the *petition of the daughters of joy of the bourdel of the city of Toulouse*, and, according to the terms of the ordinance which he enacted on this occasion, "desiring to show grace to all and to preserve in the enjoyment of their franchises and of liberty the inhabitants dwelling in his realm," he decreed in answer to the petition "that hereafter they and their successors in the said Abbey shall wear and may wear and clothe themselves in such robes and hoods and such colors as they may desire to wear, with the provision that they shall be required to wear about one of their arms, an *enseigne*, a garter or list of cloth, of another color than the robe in which they are clad, without their being subject to any arrest or fine; notwithstanding the ordinances or prohibitions pertaining to the said women nor any others whatsoever." The seneschal and provost of Toulouse and all the other officers were charged, as a consequence, to protect in the future the ladies of the Abbey, and to see that they enjoyed *peaceably and perpetually* the grace which the King had granted them, without the officers molesting them, or causing them to be molested on account of their costume (see the *Ordonn. des Rois de France*, Volume VII, page 327).

The women of the Grant-Abbaye had cause to repent the special grace they had obtained from the King in being freed from white hoods and cords. The population of Toulouse was indignant that these creatures should be permitted to abandon their *enseigne* by virtue of the ordinance of the month of December, 1389, and the word went about that they should be insulted and mistreated whenever they showed themselves in the city without



their white robes. The seneschal and provost of Toulouse winked at the indignities which they were daily compelled to undergo, and the officers of the king's justice declined to hear their complaints. Not being able to obtain justice and protection, the ribaudes, rather than renounce the benefits of the ordinance which freed them from an infamous servitude, remained shut up in their asylum (*hospitium*) and no longer ran the risk of appearing in public with a simple garter or list of another color than their robe; but they were not permitted to forget their persecutors, who came to torment them even in their retreat in the Grant-Abbaye. These persecutions tended to drive away the inmates of the place, who brought to the city a considerable revenue (*commodum matrum*), which was devoted to public expenses. This revenue continued to drop; and the treasurer of the Capitoul, whose duty it was to collect these revenues each year from the common women and their agents (*arrendatoribus*), went to make a complaint to the Capitouls of the loss of an income that was so easy and assured. An inquiry was launched, and it was learned that the inhabitants of the Abbey were no longer safe in their own dwellings; that bands of rascally young fellows and libertines (*ribaldi, leones et malevoli*) were in the habit of coming, by day and by night, to burst in upon this immodest convent and there to commit unheard-of misdemeanors; that these offenders, who feared neither God nor justice, and who appeared to be inspired by the Devil (*non verentes Deum, neque justitiam, cum sint imbuti maligno spiritu*), were in the habit of breaking down doors, entering the house, and, in order to get at the poor wretches who barricaded themselves in their rooms, they would demolish the wall or break through the roof; they would end by mistreating, beating and outraging in the most atrocious manner (*vituperose et atrociter*) the poor victims of their cruel and lubricious fury. The latter, to escape these oppressions, these violences and injuries, would accordingly flee with their servant maids and domestics (*familiares*), and the Grant-Abbaye was no longer anything more than an abandoned ruin. The Capitouls endeavored in vain to bring a remedy to

bear upon this evil, and to bring the fugitives back to the fold, by promising them support and protection; the habit had taken root, and, despite the injunctions of the Capitouls, despite the efforts of the city guards, the siege of the Abbey was incessantly renewed with the same episodes of scandalous violence. The Capitouls, in despair, besought the King to come to their aid; Charles VII, who reigned over only a few provinces of his realm, then went to Languedoc to stir up the zeal of his partisans; he repaired to Toulouse, and there examined, in council, the request of the Capitouls; he remembered that his father had decreed a joyous gift to the daughters of joy of Toulouse, and by letters patent of the 13th of February, 1425, he threatened with all his kingly wrath the authors of those excesses which had been so often repeated in the neighborhood of the Grant-Abbaye; he enjoined his officers to protect this establishment, which he took under his especial care, and he caused to be erected in front of the said place pillars bearing the *fleur de lis* (*baculos cum floribus lilii depictos*) as a sign of the royal protection (see the *Recueil des Ordonnances des Rois de France*, Volume XIII, page 75).

The arms of France struck little fear in the delinquents, who renewed from time to time their nocturnal attacks on the Abbey; they offered as an excuse the plea that they had not seen the *fleur de lis*; and the poor sinners within could only sound the alarm bell, call for aid and cry for mercy; they were happy that they escaped without a rape. In the end, they wholly abandoned the Abbey, leaving it unprotected to their tormentors; they then retired to the quarter des Croses, where they were less exposed to the insolences of the mob. The Capitouls then saw the obscene revenues climbing back to their ancient mark, and this grave consideration led them to wink at the encroachments of public debauchery within the walls of Toulouse. The fillas communes remained for nearly a century in the neighboring streets of the porte des Croses; they did not emigrate until 1525, when the University took possession of the houses which they occupied, and there erected edifices for its own use. They were again

relegated to a place beyond the walls of the city; and the city bought for them, at its own expense, a great house situated beyond the walls, in a place called the Pre-Moutardi, belonging to M. de Saint Pol, the *maître des requêtes*. This house of Prostitution, which was named the Château-Vert or the Châtel-Vert (the Green Château) no longer had to fear the assaults of the disorderly, but offered a peaceable retreat to its *pensionnaires*, who labored always at their infamous trade for the benefit of the city; but severe regulations were in force at this period regarding the institution of the Château-Vert. In 1557, the pestilence having been declared at Toulouse, an order was sent out to the amorous women to remain shut up in their stronghold and to admit no one until the influenza was over. A few of them disobeyed this police order, and were lashed in the market place; the others fled to other cities where there was no pestilence. They reappeared in Toulouse in 1560 when the improved state of public health permitted the reopening of the gates of the Château-Vert. Their return was joyously feted, but the Capitouls, offended at the railleries of which they were the object as the result of their direction of this municipal bourdel, knowing also that they were accused of buying their robes with the tax money of the Château-Vert, proceeded to give up this tax to the almshouses of the city. The almshouses did not enjoy it for more than six years, after they returned to the city a privilege that was sufficiently onerous; the benefits resulting from the exploitation of the Château-Vert were absorbed, and more than absorbed by the duties which the almshouses were called upon to perform in return for sharing in the expenses of this indecent domain; for they were required to receive and to treat the patients who came to them from the Château-Vert. Now for more than six years, these patients had been more numerous than ever, and venereal treatment cost very dearly. A solemn council was assembled at the capitol and the question which then agitated all the magistrates of the realm was discussed, namely, the radical abolition of Prostitution. The notables of the city attended this meeting, and the majority of them were in favor of the suppres-

sion of the Château-Vert; but the advice of the Abbot of the Casedieu won the day, the abbot holding with the first president of Parliament that it would be better to postpone the suppression of Prostitution to a more opportune moment.

As a matter of fact, there was not a city in which legal Prostitution was more necessary than at Toulouse; manners there were very relaxed, and the passions, under the influence of the climate, encountered imperious needs which it was necessary to satisfy within certain limits. This was a sole means of avoiding scandal and of assuring the security of respectable women. Two facts prove that the magistrates of the city could not exercise too great a surveillance over the daughters of joy, whom the Château-Vert could not confine strictly enough. In 1559, one would have found four of these unfortunate ones in the convent of Grands-Augustins; they had hidden themselves there under the monastic robe, and they served the debauchees of the whole community. Three of these false nuns of perdition were hanged at the three doors of the convent, and a true nun, their principal accomplice, was sent in irons to her bishop. In 1566, three other women of this sort crept into the convent of Béguines; they were hanged without process of law. The Château-Vert, then, still preserved, in 1587, its ancient attributes and franchises. In that year, the measures of public health were put back into force as a result of an epidemic at Toulouse; the Château-Vert was evacuated and its gates were sealed; but the prostitutes, in leaving their retreat, did not change their mode of life, and despite the pestilence, which did not frighten them, they carried on their dangerous industry. One of the Capitouls, whom the fear of the plague had forced to quit his post and to take refuge in the country, made the acquaintance of the vagabond debauchees who were encamped about the city. When the pestilence had ceased and the Capitoul had resumed his functions, he related, in the council of the city, the shameful spectacles which he had seen with his own eyes in the vineyards and the fields which had replaced the Château-Vert. There was no thought of reopening this latter, but on the other hand, all the ribaudes,



who had led there so disorderly a life during the plague, were driven out. They were locked up in prisons of the city, and were attached to tumbril-carts "for the cleaning of the streets" (*pour le nettoyage des rues*). (See the *Annales de la Ville de Toulouse* by Lafaille, Vol. II, p. 189, 199 and 280).

Such were the vicissitudes of legal Prostitution at Toulouse up to the end of the sixteenth century. The history of the bad houses at Montpellier does not go back to so remote a date; at least, the authentic documents on which we are dependent for a history are not of a date prior to the fifteenth century; but at Montpellier as at Toulouse, we see that, in accordance with the custom established from antiquity in the principal city of Languedoc, legal Prostitution enjoyed its *hospice* beyond the walls of the city and under the protection of the magistrates, who levied a tax upon the common women and their privileged agents. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, this indecent privilege belonged to one Clare Panais, who had established the headquarters of his business in a house situated beyond the walls of the city, in a place commonly called the *Bourdeau*. "It is there," say the letters patent of Charles VIII,\* who confirmed Panais' ancient privilege, "it is there that the common and public women are accustomed to make their dwelling and to reside day and night." Clare Panais enjoyed his privilege in peace and grew rich, paying in enormous revenues to the city. He had two sons, Aubert and Guillaume, whom he reared with much care, and who must have been accomplished young gentlemen. This excellent father died, and the two sons inherited the privilege attaching to the house of the *Bourdeau*; since this privilege carried with it much money, they did not dream of dispensing with it, but they did cede a part of it to Guillaume de la Croix, a money changer, who belonged to the good nobility of Montpellier, and who counted among his ancestors the famous patron of plate-victims, Saint Roch. From then on, the undivided property rights of the *Bourdeau* remained in the hands of Guillaume

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\*J. U. N. Calls attention to a discrepancy in dates here. I preserve the original text. (Charles VIII, born 1470.)

de la Croix and the two Panais brothers, who became money changers and bankers, without ceasing to exploit the firm of legal Prostitution which had been established in Montpellier. In this they were no more dishonorable than the council of the city, who handled the deniers which came from the tax on prostitutes, and in whose hands lay the direction of the Bourdeau. The mayor and magistrates who composed the council desired to prevent women of evil life from entering the city, even with the aglet upon their shoulders, and in order to deprive these women of any pretext in frequenting the rubbing rooms and public baths, where they carried on their ignoble profession in secret, the authorities proposed to the agents of urban debauchery that rubbing rooms and baths be constructed in the house of the Bourdeau. Aubert Panais and his brother Guillaume, as well as their associate, Guillaume de la Croix, consented to a great and sumptuous outlay of money (*grandes et somptueuses dépenses*), the object of which was to render the inhabitants of the Bourdeau wholly sedentary; but they profited from so fine an occasion by seeing to it that their ancient privileges in this house of tolerance were confirmed and renewed, by virtue of which, and by the payment of the sum of five pounds in the money of Tours, rendered annually to the king or to his lieutenant, "from then on, no persons of whatever estate or condition they might be, were to erect or cause to be erected, in the ancient part of Montpellier, any bourdeau, cabaret, hostelry nor other rubbing rooms, for the purpose of lodging, providing a retreat or rubbing room for the said common women, under pain of losing and having confiscated the said house, bourdeau, cabaret or rubbing room. A council of the city, to whom this was represented as a public instrument, made and entered into between the interested parties, approved once more the clauses of the contract, and augmented the advantages of the agents of the bourdeau.

But these latter were soon disturbed in their enjoyment of the privilege; one of the partners, Aubert Panais, having ceded his share to his daughter, Jaquète, who brought it as a dowry to

Jacques Bucelli, whom she married about the year 1465, a certain Paullet Dandr  a, an inhabitant of the same city, felt authorized to question the forfeiture of the privilege of the Panais. His conduct was motivated "by envy or some other reason" (*par envie ou autrement*), and he was undoubtedly supported by the *recteur* or the bailiff of the old city. He began, then, by "retiring and receiving the said common women into a house of their own, situated within the city in the part of the bailiff." But the existence of a place of debauchery within the city was an infraction of all the usages of Languedoc, and the inhabitants of the neighborhood, priests and bourgeois, complained to the consuls and protested against the audacious enterprise of Paullet Dandr  a; for they saw "the thing becoming a great vituperation and dishonor and a very bad example to married women, bourgeois and others and to their daughters and servants, and also the scandals and inconveniences which might result." Dandr  a won his point; and probably with the secret support of certain debauchees, who drew a profit from the establishment of this central house of Prostitution, he continued to keep an "amorous court" (*cour amoureuse*), and he frequently attracted there the *dames* of the Bourdeou. But Guillaume de la Croix and Guillaume Panais were rich and powerful, the former especially; they called upon the Governor of the city to close the house of Dandr  a, which had been opened contrary to the ordinances of the kings and to the privilege granted Clare Panais. They did not blush to declare themselves, in their complaint to the King, the proprietors and entrepreneurs of the Bourdeau. Charles VII justly dispatched to the States of Languedoc, as his commissioners, the Sire de Montaigu, seneschal of Limousin and the M  tres Jean H  bert and Francois Halle, king's counselors, who betook themselves to Montpellier where the States assembled in the month of December, 1458. These three personages had been brought into the affair through a request which Guillaume de la Croix and his associates had addressed to the States, which did not disdain to concern themselves with the matter. The commissioners of the King summoned the cort  ge before them and, after having heard them in

the presence of the procurator of the city, they forbade Dandr  a, under pain of a fine of ten marks in silver, to lodge or to receive in his house any public woman. The procurator of the city and the seneschal of Beaucaire were advised to see to the execution of this decree, conformable to the ancient customs of Montpellier. As to the heirs and successors of Clare Panais, they were confirmed in the enjoyment of their privilege by the payment of an annual revenue of five sols in the money of Tours to the treasury of the King; "without which no one hereafter shall establish or build any other house or public place as a habitation for the said common women, either in the Rectory or the bailiwick of the city or elsewhere." The partners, not satisfied with winning their point at law, demanded of the King in 1469, a confirmation of the decree, and this confirmation was granted them. Twenty years later, Guillaume de la Croix became a famous councilor and the treasurer of war, but he had not yet renounced his role of entrepreneur in the Bourdeau of Montpellier. Since he no longer resided habitually at Montpellier, and since Guillaume Panais no longer concerned himself with the administration of their property, he feared a reoccurrence of what Dandr  a had caused to happen before. "Doubting that some might desire, in the enjoyment of the things above set forth, to give them disturbance and to prevent them," he solicited from Charles VIII a confirmation of the letters patent which he had obtained from Louis XI, and which contained the substance of those privileges granted the Bourdeau at Montpellier. Charles VIII was careful to accord to his "friend and loyal counselor" (*am  e et f  al conseiller*), "for the public good and interest" a renewal of the ordinance which confirmed his rights in Prostitution at Montpellier, as well as those of Guillaume Panais and of Jaqu  te, wife of Jacques Bucelli, all honorable inhabitants of that city.

Like Montpellier, Toulouse and the principal city of Languedoc and Provence, Avignon had also its privileged *bourdeou*, established and constituted by virtue of royal and municipal or-



dinances; and this bad house, the most celebrated of all those in France, on account of the statutes which regulated it, appears to have been organized upon a model of the public houses of Italy. The authenticity of these statutes, which the learned physician Astruc published for the first time in 1736, in the first edition of his treatise, *De Morbis Venereis*, appears to us to be incontestable, despite the specious reputation of M. Jules Courtet in the *Revue Archeologique* (second year, third *livraison*). According to M. Jules Courtet, Astruc must have been the dupe of a mystifying pleasantry, and the apocryphal statutes, attributed to Queen Jeanne of Naples, must have been the work of M. de Garcin and his friends. It is in an anonymous note, written in hand, upon a copy of the *Cacomonade* of Linguet that we find recounted the history of this mystification, into which has been introduced as an accomplice M. Commin of Avignon, who was born ten days after the book of Astruc was published. We know, in general, what a note written on a margin of a book is worth, and we are surprised that criticism should have founded upon such a note a negation of a historic fact which has come down through the eighteenth century, that skeptical and mocking century, without being given a lie or cast in doubt. One thing is sure, if the mystifiers of Avignon had been forced to find amusement of this sort at the expense of a scholar as renowned as Astruc, all Europe would have echoed with an immense burst of laughter, and the treatise *De Morbis Venereis*, in which the fragment in question was printed for the first time, would not have escaped the consequences of such a mystification; for the end of all mystification is a satirical publicity. In any case, the facetiousness of M. de Garcin and his friends would have come to light, at least in Avignon, and Astruc would have been careful not to preserve the apocryphal statutes in the second edition of his work, corrected and augmented in 1740. This work, moreover, translated into French by Jault, and into a number of languages, would have met with more than one contradictor in the famous chapter on the *Bourdeou* of Avignon. It has been demonstrated, on the contrary, that local tradition regarding this house of Prostitution was constant and very wide-

spread, since Astruc wrote to a resident of Avignon (about 1725 or 1730) to obtain, if it were possible, a copy of the original of the statutes of 1347.

M. Jules Courtet says that this copy was made after a pretended original, which malicious forgers had interpolated into a fine manuscript of the thirteenth or fourteenth century entitled *Statuta et privilegia reipublicae Avenionensis*. This manuscript, which became part of the magnificent library of the Marquis of Cambis Velleron, afterwards found its way into the Musée Calvet, where M. Jules Courtet was able to examine it. The *Statuta prostibuli civitatis Avenionis*, which M. Jules Courtet regards as "an imitation, a clumsy counterfeit, not only in style, but also in the handwriting of the fourteenth century, "have been transcribed upon a sheet of parchment," of which the second verso still bears a copy of a bull by Pope Gregory, in the handwriting of the sixteenth century. This circumstance alone would tend to prove that there has been no attempt to deceive anyone, and that the ancient possessor of the manuscript, undoubtedly of the sixteenth century, took upon himself the task of completing it by adding to it a copy of another more or less faulty which he had succeeded in procuring. The Marquis of Cambis, who was of Avignon, and thus in a position to hear all the rumors relating to this affair, would not have failed to do away with all copies which dishonored his own manuscript in place of mentioning in his *Catalogue* the singular statutes "which are in the Provencal language as it was spoken then, and which differs little from that of today." (*Catalogue*, p. 465.) It is probable that the original existed, or had existed, in the archives of the palace of the popes or in those of the counts of Provence, and that any curious person might have made a transcription in his own manner, altering and modernizing the Provencal text, perhaps even translating into his language the Latin text. One thing appears certain, and that is that the existence of these statutes was never in doubt; and that their existence is, moreover, confirmed by their context, which is in agreement with all that we know regarding the regime of Prostitution in Provence during the Middle Ages. As to all those moral con-

siderations which have been put forward with the object of proving the gross unlikelihood of such statutes, enacted or rather consented to by a young queen, they have no value for one who studies the policing of manners at this epoch. Jeanne of Naples, Countess of Provence, was no innovator in this matter; she merely sanctioned with her sovereign authority those urban administrative natures which the magistrates of Avignon have taken in the *public interest*, from motives similar to those of Charles VIII in dictating an ordinance and *letters royal* on a similar matter.

The dissertation of M. Jules Courtet will at least aid us in demonstrating the fact that prior to the statutes of 1347, Prostitution in the Italian manner had been established in the papal city of Avignon. At the council of Vienne, held in 1311 to 1312, the pious and learned Bishop of Mende, Guillaume Durandi, demanded a severe repression of the excesses of debauchees; he was indignant at the fact that the maréchal of the court of Avignon had for tributaries common women and their scandalous accomplices; he desired that these public pests (*pestes publiques*), who exposed themselves as at a fair, at the doors of churches, before the houses of prelates, and even under the walls of the palace of the popes, be relegated to the less frequented quarters of the city; he desired also that the maréchal of the court should renounce the infamous revenues of Prostitution (see *Vitoe Pap. Aven.*, published by Baluze, Vol. I, folio 810). All the Fathers of the council echoed the complaints to the Bishop of Mendé, but no step was taken toward a reform which would have injured many special interests, and the maréchal of the pope's court continued to receive the impure revenues of his office, which were, in more ways than one, like those of the king of the ribalds of the court of France. The ribaudes multiplied and spread throughout the whole city. "There was no place," says M. Jules Courtet, "however sacred it may have been, that was protected from their incredible audacity." Petrarch, who resided in this city in 1326, was astonished at the disorder of manners, which the removal of the Holy Seat to Avignon appears to have favored as though the pope and his cardinals had brought from Rome a cortége of de-

praved men and women. "In Rome the great," says Petrarch, "there were but two courtiers of debauchery; there are eleven in the little village of Avignon." (*Cum in magna Roma due fuerint lenones, in parva Avenione sunt undecim.* See the *Latin Works* of Petrarch, edited by Bâle, folio 1184.) We can understand how Prostitution, left to itself, stood in need of a regulation like the one which made of it an institution of public utility in the other cities of Provence. Queen Jeanne, threatened in her realm of Naples, by the army of her brother-in-law, Louis of Hungary, had just laid down her crown, stained with her husband's blood; she had taken refuge in the land of France, and, after having taken in a second marriage her cousin and lover, Louis of Tarento, she prepared to sell to the pope the domain of Avignon in order to purchase absolution for her crime and the support of the papacy. It was in the presence of these grave events that the queen, who should have been at Aix, enacted or rather confirmed the statutes of legal Prostitution at Avignon, as Louis XI had confirmed similar ones for the cities of Toulouse and Montpellier. These statutes (as the first article bears witness) were drawn up by the consuls or governors of the city in the ordinary form of all the privileges granted to bad houses, and the young Queen merely signed them, without reading them, upon the word of her chancellor, who had approved them. One may advance with certainty the theory that the one to whom had been conceded the exploitation of these privileges, being the most interested in obtaining them, had not spared any money in assuring himself thus of the approbation of the Queen and in winning a royal recognition of his rights before the cession of the domain of the Apostolic Seat.

We can do no more than reproduce here the Provencal text of the statutes as Astruc has given them to us, and we regret that M. Jules Courtet has not collated this text with the one which contains the manuscript of the Musée Calvet, and which is filled with erasures and superscriptions. This fact alone should exclude all idea of forgery on the part of the copyist or other translator of the original draft. We shall proceed, then, without making any change, to give this Provencal text, and we shall follow it with a



French version, more literal than that which is to be found in the translation of Astruc's book, and which has been inappropriately repeated there with its errors and its colorless periphrases.

*I. L'an mil très cent quaranto et set, au hueit dau mès d'avous, nostro bono Reino Jano a permès lou Bourdeou dins Avignon; et vel ques toudos las fremos debauchados non se tengon dins la Cioutat, mai que sian fermados din lou Bourdeou, et que per estre couneigudos, que portan uno agullietto rougeou sus l'espallou de la man escairo.*

*II. Item. Se qualcuno a fach fauto et volgo continuâ de mal faire, lou clavaïré ou capitané das sergeans la menara soutou lou bras per la Cioutat, lou tambourin batten, embé l'agullietto rougeou sus l'espallo, et la lougeora din lou Bourdeou ambé las autres; ly defendra de non si trouba foro per la villo à peno das amarinos la premieiro vegado, et lou foué et bandido la secundo fès.*

*III. Nostro bono Reino commando que lou Bourdeou siego à la carriero duo Pont-Traucat, proché lous Fraïres Agoustins, jusqu'au Portau Peiré; et que siego une porto d'au mesmo cousta, dou todos las gens intraran, et sarrado à clau per garda que gis de jouïnesso non vejeoun las dondos sensou la permissieou de l'abadesso ou baylouno, qué sara toudos lous ans nommando per lous Consouls. La baylouno gardara la clau, avertira la jouïnessou de n'en faire gis de rumour, ni d'aiglary eis fillios abandonnados; autromen la mendro plagno que y ajo, noun sortiran pas que lous sargeans noun lous menoun en prison.*

*IV. La Reino vol que toudos lous samdès la bayouno et un barbier deputat das Consouls visitoun todos las fillios debauchados, que seran au Bourdeou; et si sen trobo qualcuno qu'abia mal vengut de paillardiso, que talos fillios sian separados et lougeados à part, afin que non las counongeoun, per evita lou mal que la jouïnesso pourrié prenre.*

*V. Item. Sé sé trobo qualco fillio, que siego istado impregnado din lou Bourdeou, la baylouno n'en prendra gardo que l'enfan noun se perdo, et n'avertira lous Consouls per pourvesi à l'enfan.*

*VI. Item. Que la baylouno noun permettra à ges d'amos d'intra dins lous Bourdeou lou jour Vendré et Samdé san, ni lou benhoura jour de Pasques, à peno d'estré cassado et d'avé lou foué.*

*VII. Item. La Reino vol que todos las fillios debauchados, que seran au Bourdeou, noun sian en ges de disputo et jalousié; que noun se doranboun, ne battoun, mai que sian como sorès; qué quand qualco quarello arribo, que la baylouno las accordé et que caduno s'en stié à ce que la baylouno n'en jugeara.*

*VIII. Item. Se qualcuno a rauba, que la baylouno fasso rendre lo larrecin à l'amiable; et se la larrouno noun lou fai, que ly sian donnados las amarinas per un sargean dins uno cambro, et la secundo lou foué per lou bourreou de la Cioutat.*

*IX. Item. Que la baylouno noun dounara intrado à gis de Jusious; que se per finesso se trobo que qualcun sie intrat, et ago agu conneissencé de calcuno dondo, que sia emprisonnat per avé lou foué per touto la Cioutat.*

I. In the year one thousand three hundred and forty-seven, on the eighth of the month of August, our good Queen Jeanne granted permission for the bordel in Avignon. She desires that all the debauched women no longer remain in the city, but that they be shut up in the bordel, and that, in order to be recognizable, they wear a red aglet on the left shoulder.

II. Item. If any girl has committed a fault and would continue to do evil, the guardian of the keys of the village or the captain of the sergeants shall lead her away, by the arms, across the city, to the sound of the drum, with a red aglet upon the shoulder, and shall lodge her in the bordel with the others, and shall forbid her to appear in the city, under pain of a fine\* for the first time, and of lash and banishment for the second.

III. Our good Queen commands that the bordel be located on the rue du Pont-Traucat, near the Augustinian brothers, at the Porte Peiré, and that there be a door on the same side by which all the world may enter, but which shall be closed with a key to

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\*I translate here La Croix' translation of the original text, which, as may be seen, is not always so accurate as it might be.

prevent any young men from seeing the women without permission of the abbess or *baillive*, who shall be named by the consuls every year. The *baillive* shall guard the key and shall see that the youth make no tumult and that they do not mistreat the abandoned girls; otherwise, upon the least complaint which shall be made against the authors of any disorder, they shall not leave the place except to be led away to prison by the sergeants.

IV. The Queen desires that every Saturday the *baillive* and a barber, delegated by the consuls, shall visit all the debauched women who shall be in the brothel; and that if he find any ill there as a result of lechery, this girl shall be separated from the others and lodged apart, in order that no one may approach her, in order to avoid the evil which youth might take from her.

V. Item, if it happen that any girl become pregnant in the bordel, the *baillive* shall take care that the infant is not destroyed and shall advise the consuls, who shall provide for this child.

VI. Item, that the *baillive* shall not permit any man to enter the bordel on the day of Good Friday, the day of Holy Saturday, and the blessed Easter Day, under pain of the lash.

VII. Item, the Queen desires that all the debauched girls who shall be in the brothel shall not engage in any dispute or jealousy; that they shall not steal nor beat one another, but that they shall live like sisters; if a quarrel occurs, the *baillive* shall reconcile them and each one shall abide by what the *baillive* shall decide.

VIII. That if anyone has committed a theft, the *baillive* shall cause her to restore the stolen object and if the thief refuse to make this restitution, that she shall be fustigated by a sergeant in a room, and in case of a second refusal, that she shall have the lash from the hand of the executioner of the city.

IX. Item, that the *baillive* shall not give access in the bordel, to any Jew, and that if it is found that any Jew has entered there by a ruse and that he has there known any woman, that he shall be imprisoned and shall have the lash at the hands of all the city.

Astruc, in reporting these statutes according to information which had been sent him from Avignon, says that they had been

copied on the books of M. Tamaran, notary and apostolic scrivener in 1392; but we possess no information regarding this Tamaran and his manuscript, with the exception of an extract from the same books, indicating that a Jew of Carpentras, named Doupedo, was publicly lashed at Avignon in 1408 for having secretly entered the *bourdeou* and there having known one of the girls. An analogous fact was related in the *Appendix Marcae Hispanicae*, where the savant, Pierre de Marca, cites an act of the year 1024, in which it is said that a Jew named Isaac had his goods confiscated and was corporally punished for having committed adultery with a Christian woman. Astruc, who has preserved this precious detail of manners (*Traité des Maladies Vénér.*, Volume I, page 219), adds few reflections to the statutes of Queen Jeanne; he limits himself, according to his system, to supposing that *le mal vengut de paillardiso* could not be a venereal malady. M. Jules Courtet says that "this article, which caused the grave Merlin to doubt of the authenticity of these statutes, would be sufficient in the eyes of many folk to invalidate the pretended original." We shall see, in compiling the history of Prostitution in England, that the statutes of the bad houses in London, forbade in 1430, the keeping in a public house of "any woman infected with the *mal de l'arsure*." By way of resume, and after a serious examination of the question, we believe that, if we do not possess the original text of the statutes of the *bourdeou* of Avignon, we have none the less the regulations, which appear to be conformable to those which municipal tolerance had put in force in the cities of the midlands. Let us not forget to remark, in passing, that the old popular refrain.

*Sur le pont d'Avignon,  
Tout le monde y passe,\**

("Over the bridge of Avignon, all the world passes") might well be a joyous allusion to the ill renown of the rue du Pont-Traucatou-Troué.

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\*Over the bridge of Avignon,  
All the world passes.  
Cf. the famous Pont-Neuf in Paris.



This street had sweating rooms so ill-famed that a synod held at Avignon on the 17th of October, 1441, forbade ecclesiastics and married men to frequent this place of prostitution, *considerantes quod stuphae Pontis-Trouati praesentis civitatis sint prostibulosae et in eis meretrícia prostibularia publice et manifeste committantur*. Those who dared to flaunt this prohibition and the excommunication which the synod attached to it were required to pay to the profit of the bishop ten marks in silver, if they were surprised coming out of these rubbing-rooms in open day, and twenty marks if they went there by night. The provost of Avignon, Jean Blanchier, was charged with executing these synodical statutes and with the interior policing of the public *étuves* (see the *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum* of Martenne, Volume IV, col. 585). A few years afterward in 1448 the Council of the city also concerned himself with the rubbing-rooms of the Servellerie, which were but dens of Prostitution like the *stuphae Pontis-Trouati*. M. Jules Courtet cites also, from the *Petites Archives* of the mayor of Avignon (Volume I of the *Délibérations du Conseil*, session of the 4th of November, 1372), a police measure relative to the dissolute women of that city. The provost caused to be cried, to the sound of the trumpet, at the street-corners, that no one of these unfortunate women was to be permitted to show herself in public with a mantle or a veil, or an amber rosary or a gold ring, under pain of a fine and the confiscation of her effects. About the same time, there was a similar *cri et proclamation* in the city of Paris, and this injunction on public women to conform to the sumptuary laws, is sufficient evidence that they were not permitted to depart from their infamous character, once they had made a profession of their trade in an impure *abbey*. We shall find further on, at Naples, in the customs of public debauchery, the traditional origin of the *Bourdeou* of Avignon, that strange institution, founded by a young, beautiful and gallant Queen.

For the rest, if the obscene abbeys were royal or municipal establishments in the majority of the cities of Provence, the lost women who devoted themselves to Prostitution were in no wise permitted to practice their shameful industry beyond the asylum

which had been granted them. Everywhere, their presence in the streets in the costumes of good women was looked upon as an infringement of police rules. An article of the statutes of Arles, which were drawn up in 1454, proves to us that these police regulations in use in that city, did not differ from those which we have seen were established at Avignon at the same epoch.

Following is the article of the statutes, reported by Millin in his *Essai sur la Langue et la Littérature Provençales*: "All public women, *putain* (*putan*), *catoniere*, or those leading an evil and dishonest life, dwelling in the way of good women, and wearing a mantle, either on the head, above the neck or the shoulders, a veil, garlands or a ring of gold or silver, shall be condemned on each count, to a fine of 50 sols and shall lose the said effects." This passage from the legislation of Arles would appear to indicate that a distinction was made between recognized women of evil life (*putan*), those, who, so to speak, possessed a patent, and the night walkers (*catoniere*), and the debauchees who dwelt in the decent streets. As to the objects of the toilet which they might not wear, these were the same which had been prohibited for the *fillios abandonnados* of Avignon.

We have not found any document which permits us to estimate the price current of the bourdeou of Queen Jeanne, but there is ground for believing that this price was very moderate, in a province where, according to the popular proverb, the best woman was not worth 15 sous: *Qui perde sa fremo eme quinze souses grand dommagi de l'argent* "he who loses his woman and 15 sous is greatly out in money." Proverbs, it is true, are so hostile to women in all the countries of the world, that we must suppose these proverbs were made without their cooperation. *Ombre d'home vaut cen fremos* (the shadow of a man is worth a hundred women), one remarked at Arles, as well as at Avignon.



## CHAPTER XVII.

WE HAVE determined the fact, in studying the moralists and the poets of the Middle Ages, that legal Prostitution was an object of horror to the people, to the bourgeoisie and to the nobility, who looked upon it as a secret defilement of society, and who with a common accord endeavored to prevent it from showing itself in the light of day and from afflicting with a startling scandal, the eyes, ears and thought of honest folk. This Prostitution was, none the less, solidly established upon a large scale, for the use of a dangerous and suspect class, which lived beyond the laws of public decency, and which was composed of ribaudes, and of debauchees of all classes, from the vagabonds or *batteurs d'estrade*, from the loafers and beggars to the jugglers, fiddlers, and *mauvais garçons*. It was necessary for each city to provide at least one asylum of debauchery for this floating population,\* which was incessantly renewed, and which constantly eluded the regular action of the municipal police. This acted as a permanent safeguard against the enterprises of these *enfants perdus*, as they were called everywhere, redoubtable to good women and their husbands, but happily diverted from their evil instincts to rape and violence when permitted to haunt the company of the *folles femmes* and to divert themselves with the latter. There were also many of these creatures who ran about the country accompanied by their *goliards* and their lovers, and these latter indulged in much feasting and junketing at the expense of the obscene traffic which was carried on under their eyes, in those courts of ribaldry where they halted with their infamous companions. But it may be said that these impurities were ordinarily confined to those places which were their customary scene, and what took place in the mysterious precincts of the Provençal

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\*Cf. our "migratory workers" and other modern sociological shibboleths.



*bourdeou* or the Norman *clapier* left no disorderly traces in the manners of the families who dwelt in the city.

These manners were often not very austere, but however relaxed they may have been, they had no intimate relations nor apparent contact with the affairs of legal Prostitution, for the common women who were at the service of this Prostitution held communion only with certain ill-famed men who shared the shame of such a life; ribaudes and ribauds formed a sort of immodest corporation, cut off from the bosom of society. Society, on the other hand, while holding itself aloof from ribaldry, displayed a conduct that was no more exemplary and did not look upon it as a sin to satisfy the vice of incontinence; fornication and adultery, the truth is, were at home in all houses and were welcome there; the seigneur in his château kept a seraglio of servant maids and pages; the monk in his convent hid the most criminal *accointances*; the merchant in his shop coveted the wife of his neighbor; the poor workman or mechanic refused himself no pleasures which cost nothing; but in the midst of this excessive immorality, Prostitution, properly so-called, did not exercise a pernicious influence, and added nothing to the general corruption; it would rather have attracted to itself the impure elements of the social life, if it had not been branded with the scourge of reprobation, if its miserable subjects had preserved some prestige in the eyes of the world, and if public opinion had not branded with the same dishonor the men who dared to enter the retreat of light women. Prostitution thus constituted failed, then, in part in its fundamental purpose, since it did not serve to purify manners, and since it left untouched, beyond its own domain, another free Prostitution, more active, more audacious, more epidemic, in a word. It might be said, and we repeat it, that for a number of centuries in France these two species of Prostitution had had no common bond between them, no relations, even indirect, no similarity in the matter of acts or persons. The civil authority troubled itself with only one of these forms of Prostitution; as to the other, which had neither livery nor mark, nor special houses nor police regulations, it promenaded with uncovered face in all the social

ranks, and it spread its poison throughout the generous and brilliant institutions of Chivalry. It was, above all, to reform manners, to impose on them a salutary bridle, to lead them back to the source of honor and of virtue that a sage legislator, an unknown philosopher and a great politician created Chivalry, which came opportunely enough, in the midst of a depraved and gangrene-infected society, to rehabilitate spirit in the face of matter, and, in a manner, to hurl defiance at all Prostitutions, of the soul and of the body. Chivalry was but an attractive form, given to philosophy, to morality and to religion; it protected, it saved the public decency, despite the inevitable excesses of the Crusades and the demoralizing influences of the poetry of the *jongleurs*.

We do not believe that Chivalry has yet been appreciated from this point of view, as the implacable enemy of every sort of Prostitution, as the safeguard of manners: she opposes the noble and pure inspirations of metaphysical love to the gross and debasing tyrannies of material love. She creates the Courts of Love, those gracious tribunals of gallantry and of *gentillesse*, in order to abolish the courts of ribaldry; she conquers and pacifies the passions with the senses; she founds virtue upon respect for oneself and others; she builds, so to speak, a pedestal of tender admiration and a throne of honor to place there—woman. This is, evidently, the principle of Chivalry; she enfranchises a sex which Prostitution had subjected to the most degrading servitude. In the one, woman was the slave and humiliated by her unworthy role; in the other she is queen, and her sovereignty reposes still upon love; but it is no longer a carnal love, the culpable pleasures of which stifle the instinct to good and predispose the heart to all vices. This latter is perfect love, it is heroic love, which finds its source in the most beautiful sentiments, and which is exalted through the imagination in freeing itself from the shackles of the physical nature. The first lessons received by a page, a varlet or a damoiseau, destined for the trade of Chivalry, were uniquely concerned with the love of God and of ladies, that is to say, according to Lacurne de Sainte-Pallaye, religion and gallantry. It was the ladies themselves who were ordinarily charged

with teaching the young the catechism and the art of love. "It would seem," says the learned author of the *Mémoires sur l'Antienne Chevalerie*, "it would seem that one could not, in those gross and ignorant centuries, have presented religion to men under a form sufficiently material to bring it within their comprehension, nor to give them at the same time an idea of love sufficiently pure, sufficiently metaphysical, to prevent those disorders and excesses of which a nation which preserved everywhere the same infectious character that it displayed in war, was capable." Lacurne de Sainte-Pallaye has not failed to glimpse the philosophic causes of the institution of Chivalry, which was in its origin a moral and religious barrier against atheism and Prostitution.

To form a good idea of the Spirit of Chivalry, one should read, in the charming *Histoire et Plaisante Chronique du Petit Jehan de Saintré*, the admonitions addressed to him by the *Dame des Belles Cousines*, when he was attached to the service of this Princess in the character of *enfant d'honneur* and of page. The lady, who speaks Latin like a Father of the Church, gives him an edifying sermon on the seven mortal sins. Following are the terms in which she counsels him to avoid the sin of lust: "Truly, my friend, this sin is, in the heart of the true lover, wholly extinguished; for so great are his fears that his lady may take displeasure, that not a single dishonest thought is in him; for in this manner, he follows the saying of St. Augustine, who says thus:

*Luxuriam fugias, ne vili nomine fias;  
Carni non credas, ne Christum nomine ledas.*

That is to say, my friend: Flee lust, in order that you may not be involved in a dishonest renown; and so, do not believe your flesh, in order that by sin you may not wound Jesus Christ. And with this, St. Peter the Apostle is in agreement, in his first epistle, in which he says: *Obsecro vos, tamquam advenas et peredrinus, abstinere vos a carnalibus desideriis qui militant adversus animam*. That is to say, my friend: I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, that you abstain from carnal sins, for they battle day

and night against the soul, and on this head, the philosopher also says:

*Sex perdunt vere homines in muliere;  
Ingenium, mores, animam, vim, lumina, vocem.*

That is to say, my friend, the man who haunts light women loses six things, of which the first is that he loses his soul, the second his genius, the third his good manners, the fourth his strength, the fifth his wisdom (*clarte*), and the sixth his voice. And for this reason, my friend, flee sin and all its circumstances." The Dame des Belles Cousines terminated her sermon upon lust by this citation, borrowed from Voëtius: "*Luxuria est ardor in accessu, foedor in recessu, brevis delectatio corporis et animae destinctio.*" That is to say, my friend, that lust is an ardent thing at first encounter, a stinking thing when you leave it, a brief delight of the body and destruction of the soul." It is certain that Antoine de la Salle, in writing the *History of the little Jehan de Saintré* for the amusement of the court of Charles VII, has drawn the materials for this history from a chronicle of the court of King John, and has drawn from a book of Chivalry, a good deal more ancient, the moral lessons of the Dame des Belles Cousines.

The ceremonies attendant upon the creation of a knight proves still more clearly that Chivalry was instituted to correct manners and to abolish Prostitution. The novice prepared himself for entering the order of Knighthood by practices of austerity and devotion, which a monk might well have introduced into a monastic order. There were rigorous fasts, nights passed in prayer in a church, dogmatic sermons on the principal articles of the Christian faith and Christian morality, baths and ablutions, prefiguring the purity necessary in the state of Chivalry, and white habits, the symbol of that knightly purity; there was finally a solemn promise, at the foot of the altar, to lead a good life before God and men. "He who would enter an order, whether in religion, or in marriage, or in Knighthood, or in any state whatever it may be," says one of the characters in the romance of *Perceforest*, "he



must first cleanse his heart and his conscience and purge them of all vices, filling and adorning them with all virtues." The numerous writings in verse and in prose which treat of the manners of Chivalry repeat, over and over again, that the true knight must be the *destroyer of corruption*. Chivalry was, then, a sort of *clergy*, which preached by example in order to render the people better and more virtuous, to maintain good order in society and to drive out all vices: "None should be received to the dignity of knight," says the respectable Chevalier de la Tour, in his *Guidon des Guerres*, "if it is not known that he loves the good of the realm and of the common people, and that he is good and expert in works of battle, and that he will endeavor, according to the commandments of the prince, to appease the discords of the people, and to combat, with all his might, all that may impair the common good." Prostitution never found grace with Knighthood, which, however, could not succeed in destroying it.

However, Knighthood could not have employed a more efficacious means than the love of ladies in inciting noble youth to the common good, those who, from the tenderest age, had been trained in this school of gallantry. "The precepts of love," says Lacurne de Sainte-Pallaye, "spread, in commerce with the ladies, those respectful considerations and regards, which, never having been effaced from the spirit of the French, have always constituted one of the distinctive characteristics of our nation. The instruction which these young people received, with respect to decency, manners and virtue, were continually sustained by the example of the ladies and knights whom they served." The first act of Chivalry was the choice of a lady or damoiselle to love and to serve; the page, varlet or damoiseau began thus his *devoir* or courtesy, and it was to this lady of his thoughts that he devoted all his *emprises* and all his feats of arms. It was to win distinction in her eyes and to win thus her love that he showed himself doughty and valiant, honest and courteous, loyal and courageous. The name and the colors with him took the place of a talisman in the most difficult circumstances of his life; he invoked her as he would a patron saint in the midst of combats, and if he was mortally

wounded, he breathed his last sigh in thinking of her and of honoring her. Nothing less resembled material love than this profound and delicate yet amorous devotion to a single lady, who frequently did not even give the recompense of a chaste kiss to a sentiment so exalted; but this sentiment, at once pure and ardent, discovered in itself an invincible force, which incessantly grew as a fixed and ecstatic idea; it was an idea attached, in a manner, like a shade to the woman who had inspired it and who did not always respond; and it persisted across time and distances, without any pause or weakening, at least so long as the object did not cease to be worthy of it. "The more witness you give me of love, the more faithful you will see me" said Albert de Gapensac, who was at once a troubadour and a knight to his lady. In the language of Chivalry, knights and squires shared mutually a desire for the good graces and the favors of the knights' ladies. These good graces, ordinarily, were limited to a smile, to a gentle glance, to a simple kiss; the favors to the gift of a kerchief, of a sleeve, of a ribbon, or to the sending of a *camise* (chemise). Olivier de la Marché ends, with a wish of this sort, a letter which he writes to the maître d'hotel of the Duke of Brittany: "I pray God that He give you joy of your lady and that which you desire" (Book II of his *Mémoires*). It is in the same sense that the Queen says to Jehan de Saintré: "God give you joy of the thing which you desire!" Now that which Jehan de Saintré desired the most was to remain alone with his mistress: "There were kisses given and kisses rendered, so many that they could not be satiated, and demands and responses such as lovers desire and command. And in this very pleasant joy they remained until they were forced to part." Despite these kisses given and rendered, despite these long interviews of love, Jehan de Saintré and his lady never exceeded the limits of true courtesy and never fell into the *bourbier de l'incontinence*. One would have said the lovers took pleasure in superexciting their desires, in order to prove to what point they were able to combat them later and to conquer them. In thus seeking danger, and in exposing themselves to it with a sort

of pride, one might suppose that they sometimes succumbed to it.\* This almost mystical love, which permitted itself everything except the final expression of these most burning vows, did not fear in a certain manner to satisfy the sensual appetites; there must frequently have been assaults such as the demon of the flesh made on holy men and women of legend, and which served to procure them a new victory, after new efforts sustained by the thought of the Redeemer, or of his divine Mother. The knights and their ladies did not flee pleasure, because they took a pleasure in triumphing over it, and even while they imposed on their senses an insurmountable barrier of decent and virtuous love, they did not refuse some of the compensations of metaphysical libertinism. Thus, the famous knight of Coucy, being on a crusade, sent a shirt which he had worn to the Dame de Fayel, who loved with a pure love this handsome knight, although she was in the power of her husband, and though she was careful not to commit adultery in fact, not to speak of intention. This shirt the lady would put on during the night, when love would prevent her from sleeping, and she would imagine in touching the linen, that she felt upon her naked flesh the kisses of her lover. These were the very words of the Dame de Fayel in the song of the knight of Coucy:

*Sa chemis qu'ot vestue  
M'envoia pour embracier.  
La nuit, quant s'amour m'argue,  
La met delez moi couchier,  
Toute la nuit à ma char, nue,  
Por mes mals assolacier.*

Everything was love in Knighthood,† but love loyal and discreet, a love of which Maître André, chaplain of Louis VII, has

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note): Cf. Balzac's Conte, "*Le Frère d'Armes*."

†The shirt he wears he sends, you see,  
That I may kiss it well;  
When love and I cannot agree,  
And night is a little hell,  
Then all night long, it works for me  
Its charming little spell.

given us the code, under the title of *Principalia Amoris Praecepta*. There is not a single law of this code which was not written under the inspiration of the noblest sentiments and the most respectable morality; one may judge of it by the following maxims: "Do not seek the love of her whom you cannot wed,—do not seek to take favors which are refused you (*in amoris exercendo solatio, voluntatem non excedas amantis*).—Even in the liveliest transports of love, do not depart from modesty (*in amoris praestando solatio et recipiendo, omnis debet verecundiae rubor adesse*).” It is, undoubtedly, far from this to the Art of Love of Ovid. Maître André, chaplain as he was, was not a novice in love, but the definition which he gives us of love, as it should be decently practiced, does not appear to condemn the manners of the worthy cleric: "Pure love is that which unites absolutely the hearts of two lovers in the bonds of an intimate tenderness, but this love consists in spiritual contemplation and in an ardent passion. It may go so far as a kiss, so far as an embrace and even so far as contact of the naked flesh, forbidding always, however, the 'last solace of Venus' " (*procedit autem usque ad oris osculum, lacer-tique amplexum et ad incurrendum amantis nudum tactum, extremo Veneris solatio praetermisso*). This legislation of love was not a dead letter. Chivalry had established, in every province, notably in those of the midlands, Courts of Love and *Parlements de Gentillesse*, feminine areopaguses, before which were tried all the causes of love. These assizes of dames were held of an evening in the shadow of a secular elm; the tribunal was presided over by a knight of distinction, who was called the *Prince of Love*, and sometimes *Prince of Youth*, elected by the ladies who composed the Court, and who had for assessors a number of high personages of the nobility and the clergy. The form of the judgments and decrees was the same as in the tribunals of royal and seigniorial justice; but the sentences always possessed a metaphysical character and never subjected the lovers to any punishment, corporal or pecuniary. It was, in a manner, public opinion, which took upon itself the punishment of the guilty. These Courts of Love, where sat the noblest dames and the most honored



ones by reason of their prud'homie, fulfilled a still more delicate mission, when they responded doctorally to questions of love which were submitted to them. "Finally," says Papon, in his *Histoire de Provence*, "gallantry so became the dominant spirit of this century of ignorance, that it came to be mingled with everything; it was the ordinary subject of conversation.\* The ladies, the knights, and the troubadours, practiced in disputing seriously on this important matter. There was no sentiment of the heart, however fine, which escaped their sagacity; all imaginable cases were foreseen and decided." This was, above all, the business of the Courts of Love, to pronounce judgment on arduous and minute questions, which the advocates of the two parties concerned would discuss with an incredible eloquence and knowledge of amorous science.

We can understand what influence such a jurisprudence as this must have exercised against Prostitution; thus, in the decrees of love which have come down to us, we do not remark any grave circumstances reflecting the licentious conduct of one or the other parties to the suit. Never does an act of debauchery come to soil the ears and minds of the judges; never does love, which is the soul of all these cases, stray off into an obscene path. There are here but the peccadilloes of lovers, the bagatelles of a refined gallantry, or perhaps the case is serious, and then the Court of Love becomes the tribunal of honor. A secretary who has been dispatched to a lady forgets his duties as an intermediary and confidante, and supplants his master, beseeching love on his own account of the lady before whom he should serve and defend the interests of another. The Countess of Flanders, assisted by sixty

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note): Yet Marcabrun, who wrote between 1150 and 1195, could indite such lines as:

Amors es maut de mal avi;  
 Mil homes a mortz ses glavi;  
 Dieus non fetz tant fort gramavi:

which may be rendered:

Love is a mould of evil avid;  
 Myriads die of love's knife gravid;  
 God never made mage more impavid.

dames, condemns the guilty one and his accomplice by declaring them excluded from the company of ladies and the plenary courts of Knighthood. Maître André cites another example of amorous jurisprudence: A lover had quitted his mistress to take a new one in her stead; he soon grew tired of the latter and desired to return to the former, who received him with contempt and denounced his conduct to the Viscountess of Narbonne. The Court of Love, presided over by the Viscountess, decided that the lover, by his act of theft and deceit, had lost at the same time the affection of his two mistresses, and was no longer worthy of possessing the heart of a respectable woman (*nullus probae feminae debet ulterius amore gaudere*). To condemn with so much rigor the fraudulent inconstancy of a lover was to promise no indulgence to Prostitution. Infidelity in a woman was condemned still more severely, for a lady whose lover had been at war in Palestine for six years, was given over to the tribunal of the Countess of Champagne, and accused of having desired to "take a new friend" (*faire nouvel ami*). This lady alleged in her defense that she had conformed to the laws of love, which commanded that one should weep two years for a dead lover, and that the absent who did not give news of himself might be likened to the dead "without doing him any injury;" but the Countess of Champagne decided, as a general principle, that a sweetheart should not abandon her lover from cause of prolonged absence. The Courts of ladies were inexorable regarding everything that resembled Prostitution of heart or of body. A knight had laden with his gifts a lady whom he loved and who did not accord him any favor in return; he went to make a complaint to Queen Eléonore de Guyenne (Aquitaine), wife of Louis VII. This beautiful Queen, who was well versed in gallantry, then rendered this memorable decree: "A woman must refuse the presents which are offered her with an armorous intent, or else she must consent to pay for them by the abandonment of her person; but in that case, she places herself in the same class with courtezans." (See the *Histoire des Mœurs et de la Vie Privée des Français* by E. de la Bedolliere, Volume III, page 323 ff.) Robert de Blois, in his

poem on the *Chastoiement des Dames*, has reproduced this fundamental maxim of the law of love, regarding the jewels which a woman receives from a man who is courting her:

*Et bien sachiez, s'ele les prent,  
Cit qui li done chier li vent;  
Quar tost lui coustent son honor  
Li joiel doné par amour.\**

The *Arrêts d' Amour* which Martial d' Auvergne collected and edited toward the end of the fifteenth century, and which another juriconsult, quite as gravely facetious, has commentated in the style of Palais, do not display so severe a morality, and some of them appear to have been dictated by a gallantry sufficiently relaxed. We are inclined to believe, therefore, from the ancient Courts of Love of Provence, that they were rendered, in the time of Martial d'Auvergne, in some assembly of dames and *gentilshommes*, holding a parliament in the manner of the *grands jours* of Perrefeu, of Signes and of Romanin. This is no longer the naïve and austere doctrine of a primitive Chivalry, which never jokes on the subject of love; it is a gallantry still refined, but malicious and libertine; one feels that love has become materialized, and one sees it having resort, without any too much scruple, to the "last solace" (*dernier soulas*). The tribunal differs also from the true Courts of Love in that it inflicts fines, sometimes considerable, and corporal penalties on the delinquents, who have a prospect of receiving the lash from the hands of the ladies and some good sum to employ in banquets and *en herbe verte*. The cases are pleaded before the judges of different retreats, such as the "mayor of the greenwood" (*maire des bois verts*), the "bailiff of joy" (*baillif de joye*), the "provost of love" (*viguier d'amours*). The allegorical nickname for these magistrates permit us to suppose that this justice was no more than a

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\*And you know well that if she takes  
Them, 'tis that love in her awakes;  
For jewels in honor cost a price,  
When given by love: that's my advice.

joke. Among the bizarre decrees which Martial d'Auvergne has collected with an artful gaiety, we shall choose two which will enable us to appreciate the merit of the others. In the XIth decree, it is a lady who complains of her friend "before the master of the forests and the waters the matter of the spoils of love" (*devant le maistre des forestz et des eaues sur le faict du gibier d'amours*); she accuses her friend of having pushed her into a river for the express purpose of being able to "put his hand upon her breasts" (*mettre la main sur les tetins*); as a consequence, she demands that this audacious lover shall be "very gravely and publicly punished" (*tres grievement puny de punition publique*). The lover replied that he had fallen into the water with her, but that, "falling, he had neither touched nor pinched her, nor had he had the time to do this, on account of the water which was over his head." Nevertheless, "the procurator of love in the matter of streams and forests stated that, by the ordinances, it was forbidden to play such a game by means of which one might feel breasts in the water," and concluded on this score, that the lover should be condemned to a heavy fine. The latter replied that if his hand, without his knowing it, had touched the breast of his lady, it had only been in falling: "And there was some force in what he said." The tribunal admitted this excuse, but decided that the lover should give to the mistress a new robe, of green color, in recompense for the robe which the water had spoiled. In the IVth decree, there is also a lady who complains of her lover, by saying "that he had kissed her robe so rudely that he had torn it, and that her gorget had been torn so that one could see the top of her chemise." She demanded that this brutal lover be forbidden "to touch her any more or to play with her without her consent." This request of the lady was granted, and the lover appealed in vain; the sentence was confirmed in a court of last resort, by the *mayor of the greenwood*.

The judgments of the Courts of Love were not the only ones which dealt with the bad manners of persons belonging to the jurisdiction of Knighthood; public opinion also had its judgments to pass, and its decrees spared neither birth, rank nor



riches, when they were directed toward shameful and reprehensible actions. Good renown was an essential condition for men as well as women who desired that honor be shown them (*qu'on leur fit honneur*), and the most puissant seigneurs, the greatest ladies, were not immune from the reproaches of the small gentry. "Those ladies who respect themselves desire to be respected," says Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye, "seeing to it well that no one is lacking in those marks of regard which are their right; but if, by an opposite conduct, they give material for legitimate censure, they have cause to fear that they may not find knights ready to act in their behalf." The Chevalier de la Tour told his daughters in 1371, that a model of Chivalry named Messire Geoffroy had devoted himself to the repression of misconduct in women: "When he is riding through the fields and he beholds the château or the manor of any lady, he demands always to whom it belongs, and when someone says to him, 'it belongs to such and such a one,' if the lady harbors any reproach in her honor, when he comes to her door, he takes a little piece of chalk which he carries and writes on this door and makes on it a sign and then poops on it.\* On the contrary, when he passes the hostelry of a lady or damoiselle of good renown, if he is not in too great haste, he goes to see her and cries: 'My good friend, or my good lady or damoiselle, I pray God that in this good and this honor He will continue to keep you in the number of good women, for you well deserve to be praised and honored.' And in this manner, the good women fear for themselves and are more firm in doing nothing by which they may lose their honor or their state."† We do not know what could have been the nature of this signet which the Chevalier

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\*Our knightly friend may have been *sans peur*, but hardly *sans reproche*. It was some time after, perhaps, that gentlemen stopped telling. Today, such a "knight" would, very likely, be called a "cad." Not to say, a plain old-woman busybody. Which is the only example of moralizing to be found in these footnotes.

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) As also men. Thus, Walter Von der Vogelweide:

Swere guotes wibes minne hât  
Der schamt sich aller missetât

He who has a good woman's love,  
For every ill takes shame thereof.

Geoffroy marked on the door of ill-famed women, and who invited passers-by to salute with a poop the mistress of the place as a sign of contempt, a thing which the people never failed to do whenever they met a public woman in their path.

However, if public morality, thanks to Knighthood, made daily progress in all classes of society and filtered by degrees down to the lowest classes, Prostitution, hiding itself in the depths of its own retreats, continued to dishonor the speech of every day and to find an outlet in the poems of the *trouvères*. These poets of the *langue d'oïl* were not, like the troubadours, knights and squires, nourished in the Courts of Love and early educated in the lessons of a fine gallantry; the *trouvères*, coming the most of them from the people, preserved in their works an original touch and made use in their compositions, which were full of verve, of gaiety and of malice, of the crude and gross language which they had learned in the homes of their parents. They called each thing by its own name, and they employed by preference the most popular expression, which was always the most picturesque. Their first auditors had been villagers, mechanics, merchants, *vilains*, in a word, and if these judges were connoisseurs in matters of pleasantries and a joyous frankness, they found nothing too gross nor too obscene in details or in words. This was not all; the *trouvères*, who had quitted the plow or the shuttle in order to rhyme *romans*, *chansons*, *lais* and *fabliaux*, embraced a vagabond and disorderly life. They became almost all of them drunkards and debauchees, living with the jugglers, *jongleurs* and *canteors*, who were rightly looked upon as the most depraved of men. These *jongleurs*, at least ordinarily, did not themselves compose the verses which they chanted or recited; they merely repeated them with more or less *savoir faire* and intelligence; they accompanied their recital or their chant with pantomimes, dances, and clever tricks. The same actor undoubtedly sometimes united the distinct trades of *trouvère* and juggler, but this was never more than an exception, all the more rare for the reason that the *trouvères* were not the object of so much contempt as were the jugglers and the fiddlers. These latter, as a matter of fact, well deserved the

contempt which was accorded them everywhere; they gave themselves to all vices, and especially to the most infamous ones. They recognized no social law; they wandered from city to city, from château to château, trailing after them a troop of jugglers and of children; in short, they kept a school of Prostitution. And yet, they were by no means rich; they were to be seen wandering, half naked, often with not a whole robe to their back, as they are painted for us by a poet of the thirteenth century, *sans sorcot et sans cotelle*, their shoes *pertuissés*, and covered with vermin. These wretches, as one may rightly think, had all been reared in the Courts of Miracles; their manners and their language reflected the defilement of these courts, and it was they who, in running about the country, corrupted at once the language and the manners of the people. They had first made their way into respectable assemblages, into feasts and knightly fetes, where they recited the *chansons de geste*, those faery epics of the Round Table and of Charlemagne; they won, then, the enthusiasm of their audience, composed of seigneurs and of ladies, who did not tire of hearing of arms and love. There were always, in these old rhymed romances, some scenes which were free enough and some licentious terms, but the intention of the poet was always irreproachable, and the juggler did not add, by his jests and his grimaces, to the indecency of the picture. He was, then, generously paid; he was given robes and new cloaks; he was lodged, along with his valets and his animals (for he carried with him also, dogs, apes and birds, trained to do various tricks);\* he was lodged in the château, and when he departed with his purse well furnished, he was invited to return by being offered the stirrup cup.

This paradise of *jonglerie* became changed into an inferno under the reign of St. Louis; the trouvères still composed their *chansons de geste*, containing from twelve to twenty thousand verses, but the jugglers no longer learned these by heart, no longer recited them; a notable change had taken place in public taste;

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\*Cf. our modern vaudeville.

there was no longer an eagerness at table to listen to the marvelous deeds (*gestes*) of the Knights of King Arthur, and the Emperor Charlemagne; one preferred to read in the silence of the *retrait* or study. The jugglers adapted themselves readily to this caprice of fashion, the result of the influence of the Crusades; they dropped their old baggage and no longer recited anything but *contes*, lively and devout. The *trouvères*, those at least who drew their inspiration from the people, responded with good will to the pleasant reception which was accorded their *fabliaux*, and they invented a great number of these, one more joyous than another, which were widely popularized to the sounds of the hurdy-gurdy and the *rote*, in all companies where the old Gallic laughter was still to be found. But the abuse of this species of entertainment soon caused it to be condemned and proscribed; the *trouvères* no longer put any limit on the license of their compositions, and the jugglers exaggerated the obscenity to a still greater degree; jugglers and *trouvères* were looked upon as tools of the Devil, and to them was imputed, possibly with justice, a new development of Prostitution. And yet, the pious Louis IX had protected the fiddlers' art (*la ménestrandie*), since, after his dinner and before hearing grace, he was in the habit of giving audience to the *menestries*, who would play the hurdy-gurdy before him; but these encouragements were addressed only to music and not to the *fabliaux*, for, according to an ancient text, adopted in many editions of Joinville, "he expelled from his realm all *besteleurs* and other players at sleight-of-hand through whom came to the people much lasciviousness." This lasciviousness was not displeasing to certain nobles, who, despite the chaste instructions of Chivalry, showed themselves passionate partisans of the "gay science" (*gaie science*), and never closed the doors of their manors on the most debauched jugglers; but in general, the poor fiddlers were banished from the château, and the sound of their instruments, announcing their presence at the moat of a seigniorial residence produced no other result than did the barking of dogs. According to a facetious apologue written in Latin at this period (see the *Fabliaux* of Legrand d'Aussy, Volume IV,



page 357), God, in creating the world, placed in it three sorts of men, the nobles, the clergy, and the villains (*vilains*). He gave to the first the land, to the second the tithes and alms, and to the third labor and misery; but dissatisfied with this division, the fiddlers and the ribauds, simultaneously presented a request to God, demanding that he repair their fate and assign them the means of livelihood: "The Lord," says the author of the apologue," charged the nobles with feeding the fiddlers and the priests with entertaining the harlots. The latter have obeyed God and zealously fulfilled the law which was imposed upon them; and so they shall undoubtedly be saved. As to gentlemen who have no care of those who have been confided to them, they can expect no salvation." The jugglers, being no longer received in the château, suddenly forgot the chansons de geste and respectable poetry; they had found a public that was easier to divert and less scrupulous as to the nature of its pleasures. They now knocked at the doors of bourgeois and of merchants; they came to take their seats in taverns; in the house of the good *populaire*, who received them with joy, and who did not smile from the wrong side of his mouth at the licentious stories which they would relate after drinking.

These contes, precious monuments of the imagination and the gaiety of our ancestors, formed a considerable body of poetry, of which only a part has been published in the original by Barbazan and translated by Legrand d'Aussy. It is from this smutty repertory that Boccaccio, Ariosto, La Fontaine and a thousand other modern poets and romancers have drawn those comical subjects and ideas, which they have merely given a new form. "The collection of fabliaux," says M. Émile de la Bédollière, "abounds in pecant sallies, in droll inventions, and in an infectious gaiety, but it is frequently marked by a disgusting obscenity; the dirtiest words of the French language here appear to have been scattered prodigally at pleasure; the most vulgar functions of the human body are here the subject of gross pleasantries; the most secret parts of the body are here named in terms at which the prostitutes of today would blush." As evi-

dence of this general appreciation of the fabliaux of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the ingenious author of the *Histoire des Moeurs et de la Vie Privée des Français* cites the titles of a few, which he chooses from the edition of Barbazan: *Fabliau de la m. . . . ; une femme pour cent hommes; de Charlot le juif qui chia en la pel dou lievre; du Chevalier qui fesoit parler les c. . . . et les c. . . . ; de l'anel qui fesoit les v. . . . grand et roides; du vilain à la c. . . . noire; d'une pucelle qui ne pooit oïr parlor de f. . . . , qu'elle ne se pas mast, etc.\** Barbazan has omitted, in the manuscripts where they still remain unpublished, a number of fabliaux the titles of which promise stories still more smutty in character, if that is possible; M. de la Bédollière records a few of these titles, from the *Ms., codex 1830, Bibl. Nationale; de la male vieile qui conchia la preude feme; du fouteor; du conin*; from *Ms. 7218: du c. . . . et du c. . . . de honte et de puterie; du v. . . . et de la c. . . . ; du c. . . . qui fut fait à la besche, etc.* In order to form an idea of this joyous literature, we must read some of the freest stories of La Fontaine, who delighted in reading the trouvères; but one cannot form a true idea of the monstrously libertine language of these poets, who held a Court of Muses in bad houses, except by comparing their waggish works with those of Glécourt, Piron and Robbé, those brazen trouvères of the eighteenth century.

"It is evident," says M. de la Bédollière (Volume III, op. cit., page 341), "that our ancestors daily uttered, without any feeling of their immodesty, words which we have proscribed; but they were not strangers to delicacy, and the scandalous contes inspired a merited disgust in decent folk."† In the *Jeu de Robin et Marion*, a little comedy mingled with songs,‡ performed in the thirteenth century, the author of which, Adam de la Halle, was one of the most esteemed trouvères of his time, one of the characters of the piece named Gauthier, under pretext

\*These titles are so frank that it has been deemed best, in view of the ever-present Comstockery, to leave them in the old French.

†J. U. N. calls attention to "1601," attributed to Mark Twain.

‡Cf. our "musical comedy."

of reciting a *chanson de geste*, intones a smutty refrain; Robin interrupts him, saying to him in a tone of reproach:

*Ah! Gauthier, je n'a voiel plus; fi!  
Dites, serez-vous toujours teus (tel)?  
Vous estes un ord (sale) menestreus!\**

The fiddlers and the jugglers appeared to be in a conspiracy to propagate this indecent language, in playing and singing the songs of the *trouvères*; and the latter, with a literary reputation as models in the *art de rithmer et de bien dire*, exercised a sorry influence over the written as well as the spoken language; for whoever wrote, in prose or in verse, felt authorized by their example to employ the most indecent words, and complacently to make use of the most immodest images.† The *trouvères*, in their most elevated compositions, did not restrain themselves from this bad habit of mingling with the poetic language the idiom of the taverns and the *bordiaux*. The author of the celebrated romance of *Partenopes de Blois* gives us a picture which would be more in place in a *fabliau*:

*Il li a les cuisses ouverts,  
Et quant les soles i a mises,  
Les flors del pucelage a prises.‡*

The author of the romance of *Garin le Lehorain* does not attribute a language that is any more decent to his knights; one of the latter cries, in an access of pruriency:

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\*Ah! Gauthier, you give me pain!  
Shall this be always your refrain?  
Yours is a dirty minstrel strain!

†Whether the effect of these "immodest" poets on language and literature was a bad one is rather open to question. Our *litterateurs* of today might well go back to Provence. We might then produce, if such a thing is possible, a Rabelais, or at least a writer with something of Rabelais' sensuous feeling for life. The French have the nearest contemporary approach to Rabelais in Joseph Delteil, the author (among other things) of "Jeanne d'Arc."

‡Her thighs he has outspread,  
And having done what seemeth good,  
He takes the flowers of maidenhood.

*Si la tenoie, par mon chief a naisil,  
La demoisel coucheroie avec mi!\**

Sometimes the trouvère attacked a holy subject, but he made no change in his vocabulary; thus, in the *Miracles de Nostre-Dame*, the poet-translator who does not appear to have been purified by his subject, is pleased to describe the episodes of a wedding night, in which, by grace of the immaculate Virgin, the husband plays but a sorry role:

*La nuit première, en son beau lit,  
Faire en cuida tout son delit,  
Li espoux, es c. . . de sa fame;  
Mais si la garda Nostre-Dame. . . .  
Chascune nuit que il anuite,  
Touz fois revient à la meslée,  
Mais la porte est si fort peslée  
Si fort serrée et si fort close,  
Qu' entrer ne puet pour nule chose . . . †*

The poets and writers who did not possess the privilege of *bouche en cour*, that is to say, who did not dine at the tables of kings and princes, were little versed in making a distinction between language which was decent and that which was not; they ignored the real value of words, and they did not suspect that the language had many sorts of style, each appropriate to the character of a particular work. The sentiment of literary de-

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\*Freely (and prudently):

If but I held her on my knee,  
The demoisel should sleep with me.

†In his fine bed on that first night,  
He does his duty, and does it right.  
He is insane about his wife,  
And if Our Lady guard his life,  
He will return, all brave and bright,  
And newly girded for the fray.  
The door is barred in every way—  
He's seen to that, that not a thing  
May dally with his dallying.



cency did not even touch them when they left a profane for a sacred subject. One of these trouvères it was undoubtedly, who was charged with the task of translating the Bible into French for the use of a Prince of France. He executed his task with all the conscientiousness of which he was capable, and yet he made no scruple of introducing into his literal translation a multitude of words, which while they had been employed in Hebrew by Moses, were not admissible in the Holy Scriptures done into French; and yet, this strange translation was copied upon vellum by a scribe, adorned with miniatures and given a beautiful binding. It was in this state that it came into the hands of the kings of France, who for many generations read the Bible in this beautiful manuscript, and who were not scandalized at meeting there, on every page, enormities like those which M. Paulan Paris has extracted in his excellent *Catalogue des Manuscrits Français de la Bibliothèque du Roi*: “And another time God said to Abraham: Each male among you shall be circumcised, and you shall circumcise the flesh of your p. . . .; let this be a sign of covenant between me and you. Then Abraham led forth Ishmael, his son, and all the freemen of his house, and all the males and all the herdsmen of his house, and he circumcised the flesh of their p. . . . (Chapter 17, verses 10 and 23). Our Lord surely remembered Rachel, and opened her c. . . .; and she conceived and bore a son (Chapter 30, verse 22). They were incensed at the deflowering of their sister. . . . and they replied: Should they have used our sister as a whore (Chapter 3, verses 13 and 31)!\* This French Bible has been preserved (No. 6, 701) among the manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and one is astonished in reading it, that it was not translated for the use of the clapiers of Glatigne, of Tyron, and of Brisemiche, rather than to serve the devotions of the Most Christian Kings. Moreover, the moralists and preachers, who frequently addressed the people, were not any more reserved in the

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\*(J. U. N.'s Note:) This passage from the Vulgate corresponds, almost word for word, to our Authorized Version. Moreover, much more indecent passages could be cited.

choice of their expressions, which they took out of the mud to mingle them with holy or edifying things. St. Bernard thought he was still preaching in Latin when he exclaimed energetically in one of his sermons: "An old woman who leads a stinking life of the body is a whore (*putain*)!" Another preacher of the same period, in a discourse on humility, took for text these words of the royal prophet: *Laus mea sordet eo quod sit in ore meo*; and he interpreted them thus: "My praise is but *merde* and *conchiure*!" The language of Prostitution had spread everywhere, even into the Church, which had the wisdom to forbid the faithful to read holy books indecently travestied in the vulgar style.



## CHAPTER XVIII

**K**NIGHTHOOD had certainly repressed the successors of Prostitution, but it was powerless to do away with the institution. From the end of the twelfth century, a happy amelioration was perceptible in public and private manners, despite the perduring and corrupting effect of popular poetry, which had ended by replacing heroic poetry. There were still undoubtedly many disorders among the nobles and the lower classes; but ordinarily, the former no longer set an example of the most abominable sort of perversity for the common people. Thus, although the habits of the Orient had been introduced into the army of the Crusaders, vice against nature was no longer as frequent as it had been at the court of Normandy in 1120. According to Guillaume de Nangis, a prelate no longer dared brazenly advertise his turpitude like that Bishop of Orleans, named Jean, who in 1092, had himself called Flora by his mignons (*concubii*) and who, in the public places, would listen to infamous adolescence devoted to masculine debauchery, singing of an evening hideous songs composed in his honor (*quidam enim sui concubii*), says the venerable Ives de Chartres in a letter addressed to Pope Urban II, *appellans eum Floram multas rhythmicas cantilenas de eo composuerunt quae a foebis adolescentibus sicut nostis miseriam terrae illius, per urbes Franciae in plateis et compitis, cantitantur*). These satiric writers undoubtedly were none too kind to the vices of their epoch; they accused the lords of avarice, pride, cruelty, and gluttony, but they did not reproach them, like the historians of the 11th century, with living in an abyss of immodesty (*impudicitatis barathrum*). Orderic Vital cried out with a groan "that license no longer knew any bounds, and that the people had forgotten the example of the heroes in giving themselves to the most unbridled



Prostitution.” He was tireless in cursing the iniquity of his age (*sevitia iniqui temporis*, he says, in Book III of his *Chronicle*); and yet, amid the frightful license of the eleventh century, the Church was laboring actively at the reform of the monastic orders, and Knighthood, an institution attributed to an old hermit who had stepped down from a throne, (this tradition was probably but a symbol) had begun to regenerate the nobility by correcting their bad manners.

It is to the salutary influence of Knighthood that we must assign the conversion of the greatest sinner the eleventh century produced. Among so many “sons of the Devil” (*filz du diable*), as they were called, Guillaume or William, the ninth of the name, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitiers, was the Goliath of Prostitution, if we may make use of a Biblical figure in describing the enormous debaucheries of this Prince, whom M. Émile de la Bédollière describes as the *Joconde du onzième siècle*. According to the judgment of a contemporary troubadour (*Choix de Poésies Orig. des Troubadours*, Vol. V, p. 115), he was the greatest deceiver of women and the most arrant libertine that the world knew (*si fo uns dels maiors trichadors de dampnas et anet lonc temps ter lo mon per enganar las domnas*). All means were good to him when there was a conquest to be made; he did not disdain to spread his nets to his most humble vassals, and he had a particular taste for the religious, whom he frequently seduced in their convents. We have already mentioned his project of a bad house constructed on the model of the abbeys, and destined to receive a congregation of public women under the direction of the greatest rakes of Poitou. We do not know what prevented him from putting this plan into execution, since he had caused the abbatial edifice to be erected. He was greatly taken with the beautiful Countess of Châtellerault, named Malborgiane, and he lived in concubinage with her, after having dismissed his legitimate wife. He had the portrait of his mistress painted on his shield, saying that he desired to bear it into battle, as she bore him in the bed (*dictitans se illam velle ferre in proelio, sicut illa portabat eum in triclinis*). William of Malmesbury,

who relates in his *Chronicle* the licentious eccentricities of the Duke of Aquitaine, gives us to understand that this terrible fornicator did not pride himself on being faithful to the Viscountess, whom he yet loved with passion. On the night of Holy Saturday, he was in a church listening to a sermon on the resurrection of Christ. "What a fable! What a lie!" he cried, bursting into laughter. "If that is your opinion," the preacher vivaciously responded, "why are you here?" "I stay here," replied the impious one, "to look at the pretty ones who come to keep Easter eve." One day he fell ill, and a monk who was caring for him advised him to prepare for a good death. "You would like, I can see," replied the dying man, "for me to give my goods to parasites, that is to say, to the priests! They shall not have a single obole. As to my debaucheries, I have nothing to repent; many who are very wise have assured me that all women are and must be common, and that to yield to their caresses is but an inconsequential sin." He did not die in final impenitence, for, under the auspices of Knighthood, he suddenly passed from the cult of matter to a spiritual contemplation, from incredulity to faith, and from the scandal attached to his unclean life to the edifying practices of aestheticism; he became a soldier of Christ and expiated his sins by a striking repentance. He was then old and could no longer continue the *train d'amour* he had led in his youth, even by having recourse to those factitious excitations which medical charlotanism offered to old libertines, and of which the learned Arnould de Villeneuve has preserved the recipe under this title: *Ad virgam erigendam*. Guillaume d'Aquitaine, in his youth, had carried his sensual researches very far, and rumor had accorded to him the honor of various erotic inventions, which are also to be found in the works of Arnould de Villeneuve, who had the modesty to translate them into Latin (*Ut desiderium et dulcedo in coitu augmentetur.—Ut mulier habeat dulcedinem in coitu. . . .*).

The Crusades were the finest moments of Chivalry, and yet it cannot be denied that this prodigious mobilization of men of all ages, of all ranks and of all countries, had warmed in its breast

the corrupting germs of Prostitution. The Abbé Fleury, speaking of these innumerable armies, which burst upon the Orient, says with reason that they were worse than ordinary armies. "All vices reigned in them, both those which the pilgrims had brought from their own countries, and those which they had learned in the country of the stranger." We have reported, after the statements of Joinville, that in the first Crusade of Saint Louis, the latter's barons "set up their brothels" (*tenoient leurs bordaux*) about the royal tent. Things must have been worse in the preceding Crusades, especially in the first, which set all Europe on end. "The Crusaders," says Albert of Aix, "conducted themselves in a gross manner, being senseless and uncontrollable, until carnal love came to extinguish in them the flame of divine love. They had in their ranks a throng of women wearing the habits of men, and they traveled together without distinction of sex, trusting to the chances of a frightful promiscuity." The author of the *Gesta Urbani II* limits himself to stating the fact: *Innumerabiles feminas secum habere non timuerunt, quae naturalem habitum in virilem nefaire mutaverunt, cum quibus fornicaverunt: (Histor. des Gaules Vol. XIV, p. 684)*. Albert of Aix adds some details which permit us to divine some others still more scandalous: "The pilgrims did not abstain from illicit unions and the pleasures of the flesh; they gave themselves without relaxation to all the excesses of the table, diverting themselves with married women or young girls, who had only quitted their hearths in order to yield to the same follies, and to hurl themselves imprudently into every species of vanity." In order to understand the sort of vanities of which the chronicler is speaking, we must visualize that mass of vagabonds and fanatics violating women and dishonoring the hospitality which they received in Hungary, (*Puellis eripiebatur, violentiâ ablata, virginitas; dehonestabantur conjugia*). It was not without cause that the hand of God was extended over these wretches who "had sinned in his eyes, by wallowing in all the defilements of the flesh." Not a third of this undisciplined horde, stained with all crimes, arrived in Palestine.

The Courts of Miracles and the places of Prostitution had furnished their impure contingent for the army of the Crusaders, in which the *ribaudes*, *pékins* (*piquichini*), the beggars (*trudennes*) and the vagabonds (*thafurs*) formed redoubtable bands, including many lost women who had taken up the Cross with their lovers. All the armies of the Middle Ages were invariably followed by a horde of unemployed *goujats* and *ribaudes*, who accompanied the baggage train and pillaged it en route. The soldier, or *soudoyer*, could not dispense with this embarrassing, and, at the same time, annoying cortége; the women served them as a pastime, while the men made themselves useful upon occasion by bearing bundles and by ravaging the country through which the troops passed. The Crusaders did not renounce their military manners in vowing themselves to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, and when women were lacking in Palestine, where the Mohammedan religion was opposed to all illicit commerce with Christians, reinforcements of Christian women were sent forth from Europe, and these contributed in their manner to the triumph of the Crusades. An Arabic historian Em-ad-Eddin, reports that, during the siege of Saint-Jean-D'Acre, in 1189, "three hundred pretty French women, who had been brought to the Isles, arrived upon a boat for the solace of the French soldiers, to whom they devoted themselves entirely; for the French soldiers would not go into battle if they were deprived of women." The same historian cited by Hammer in his *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, adds that the example of the Franks was contagious for their enemies, who also desired to have ladies of joy in their army, where such a rule had never before been tolerated. This multitude of women in the rear of the French armies was a common thing up to the end of the sixteenth century. Geoffroy, monk of Vigeois, estimates at fifteen hundred the number of concubines who followed the *ost* of the king in 1180, while the adornments of these royal courtezans (*meretrices regiae*) had cost an immense sum (*quarum ornamenta inestimabili thesauro comparata sunt*). This chronicler undoubtedly is speaking only of those women who were the direct subjects of



the king of the ribalds, and who only practiced their vile trade by paying a revenue to this officer of the royal house. As to the free and unauthorized ribaudes, their number must have been at least twenty times larger, especially in the irregular armies, like those of the Crusades, and like those *Grandes Compagnies* who hired themselves to whoever was able to pay for them and who could promise them their share of booty. The monk of Vigeois enumerates the different sorts of soldiers who, at the end of the twelfth century, like a cloud of locusts, ravaged the country through which they passed: *Primo Basculi, postmodum Theuthonici, Flandrenses; et, ut rustice loquar, Brabansons, Hannuyers, Asperes, Pailler, Nadar, Turlau, Vales, Roma, Cotarel, Catalan, Arragones, quorum dentes et arma omnem Aquitaniam corroserunt*. Each of these voracious bands drew after it a throng of prostitutes, whose numbers were constantly increased, and who took part in the pillaging of cities sacked by the army.

We meet everywhere in the military history of France and the other nations of Europe with these debauched women following the armies in campaigns; the rear guard was always composed of women of this sort and their companies, ribauds and goujats, for whom, according to a popular expression, nothing was too warm nor too heavy to be carried away. This rear guard, inconvenient and unprepossessing as it was, was often almost as numerous as the rest of the army. We read, in the *Chronique de Modène*, written by Jean de Bazano (see the great collection of Muratori Vol. XV, Col., 600), that a German captain named Garnier, who had invaded at the head of three thousand five hundred lances the territory of Modène, of Reggio, and of Mantua at the beginning of the year 1342, was accompanied by a thousand prostitutes, *mauvais garçons* and ribaudes (*mille meretrices, ragazzii et rubaldi*). The chiefs of war and their captains, however, doughty as they may have been as knights, were powerless against this Prostitution of the camps; their troops would have revolted and refused to serve under the banners of one who had not afforded the protection to those light women

destined for the solace (*soulas*) of the soldiers. Jeanne d'Arc\* alone, who had a horror of bad women, although the English called her the *Putain des Armignats* (see Michelet's *History of France*, Vol. V, p. 75), drew from her divine mission sufficient authority to enable her to expel from the King's army all these despicable creatures. She first of all ordered her soldiers to go to confession, "and made them send away their women" (*fillettes*), says the anonymous author of the *Mémoires* concerning this chaste heroine. "It is known," related Jean Chartier, in his *History of Charles VII*, "that, after the day of Patay, the said Jehanne la Pucelle, issued a proclamation that no man of her company was to keep any infamous woman or concubine." Custom, however, was stronger than will, and a few of these women who felt that they were supported by their lovers, endeavored to brave the order of la Pucelle. The latter, when Charles VII was reviewing the army at Sanarre, before his departure for Rheims, perceived "a number of debauched women who prevented any men of arms from being diligent in the service of the King." And she drew her sword of Fierbois and fell upon these miserable ones, laying about her with so good a heart that the sword broke over their shoulders. Charles VII was very chagrined at this accident, and he remarked to Jehanne that it would have been better to take a stick to strike them with, rather than to lose such a sword which had come to her by miracle. La Pucelle, understood well enough, that the presence of a woman was inimical to discipline in an army, and she herself had donned men's clothing in order not to excite the carnal concupiscence of her companions at arms. "It seems to me," she remarked, "that in this state I shall better preserve my virginity of thought and deed." Her virginity, the truth is, was not soiled, although a number of great lords were "resolved to know if they might have her carnal company;" but when they presented themselves to her, *gentiment habillée*, "all evil intentions fell away from them."

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\*See Jeanne d'Arc, par Joseph Delteil, Bernard Grasset, Paris, 1925.

The ruling of Jean d'Arc against the ribaudes of the militia could not, in the nature of things survive her; and this was but an exception in the life of men-at-arms, who did not for long part with the company of their concubines. It is possible that this large number of dissolute women attached to the permanent service of an army had sometimes a favorable influence in the ordinary circumstances surrounding the taking of a city, for the soldier, knowing that his mistress was among the public women of the army, was less ardent in outraging and violating his women prisoners. However this may have been, the number of amorous women enrolled, so to speak, under the banner of a captain, diminished or augmented in ratio to the success or failure of the expedition. In an age when pillage was an inevitable condition of warfare, these prostitutes claimed the better part of the spoil. The better equipped, the better provisioned, the better paid an army was, the more Prostitution flourished on all sides. Thus the fine army which Charles the Rash, Duke of Burgundy, led in person into the country of the Swiss in 1476, was amply furnished with a feminine cohort and, after the defeat of Granson, the conquerors found in the Duke's camp, as Philippe de Comines tells us, "great bands of valets, merchants and daughters of joyous love." But the Swiss cared little for prisoners of this sort; for, Comines adds, "the messieurs of the League took each his belly full and his fill of pikes, culverins, armor and other precious trifles; but as regards the two thousand courtezans, joyous *donzelles* reflecting that such merchandise would be of little profit to them, they let these flee away across the fields." Despite this indifference, to the Flemish and Burgundian courtezans, the Swiss did not lead under their own banners a life any more austere than their enemy; for in times of peace, there were to be found in their villages, at the expense of the community, a certain number of daughters of joy who, in times of war, were bodily attached to the companies and bands of each canton. (*Rec. d'Edits et d'Ordonn. Royaux.* by Neron and Girard, 1720, in-f., Vol. I, p. 643.)

Let us come back to Chivalry, which did not always set an example of chastity and continency. The knights, who made a perfect sort of love to dames and damoiselles, and who obtained from the latter none but decent gifts, sometimes kisses, but rarely what was called the "gift of love and mercy" (*don d'amour en sa merci*)—the knights made up for these privations with servant maids and *fillettes*. It was even one of the customs of hospitality to "garnish the couch" (*garnir la couche*) of a knight who demanded asylum in a château. Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye cites apropos of this courteous custom, a very curious extract from a fabliau (*Ms. du Roi*, No. 7,615, fol. 210), in which a lady who has received a knight in her house is unwilling to go to sleep until she has sent him a bed companion.\*

*Et la comtesse à chief se pose  
Apele un soun (sienne) pucelle,  
La plus cortoise et la plus belle;  
A consoil (en secret) li dis: Belle amie,  
Alez tost, ne vous ennuit mie!  
Avec ce chevalier gesir (coucher) . . .  
Si le servez, s'il est metiers (besoin).  
Je isa lassa volontiers,  
Que ja ne laissasse pour honte,  
Ne fust pour monseigneur le conte  
Qui n'est pas encore endormiz . . . †*

The *dame châtelaine* was, undoubtedly, no stickler for convention, and she must have learned a lesson in compliance from the

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\*Guest prostitution again. (J. U. N.)

†The Countess directs her serving man

To summon a comely maid,  
A courteous wench, but not too staid;  
And to the girl she whispers low:  
Listen, dear friend, I would have you go  
And sleep with this bold knight;  
Satisfy his need, my dear,  
For he is a gallant cavalier,  
And I would serve him myself, I vow,  
But it is not safe just now,  
Since my lord the Count sleeps light.





*Les chevaliers estoient vertueux  
 Et pour amours plains de chevalerie,  
 Loyaux, secrez, friskes et gracieux:  
 Chascuns avoit lors sa dame s'amie,  
 Et vivoient liement (joyeusement);  
 On les amoit aussi tres loyalment,  
 Et ne janglois (jasait), ne mesdisoit en rien,  
 Or m'esbahy quant chascun jangle et ment,  
 Car meilleur temps fut le temps ancien!\**

The complaints of Eustache Deschamps were but too well justified in view of the orgies of the court, where Charles VI and his brother, the Duke of Orleans, who prided themselves on *maintaining* true Chivalry, appear to have forgotten their own virtuous precepts. The tourney celebrated in 1389 at Saint-Denis in honor of the King of Sicily and his brother, who were armed knights, ended in a hideous saturnalia of which the abbey was the scene. The religious of Saint-Denis in his *Chronicle of Charles VI*, has not seen fit to pass over in silence the debauches of the fourth night. "The seigneurs," he says, "in turning night into day and in giving themselves to all the excesses of table, were led by drunkenness into such debaucheries, that, without respect for the presence of the King, a number of them defiled the sanctity of the religious house by abandoning themselves to libertinism and adultery. (*ad. inconcessan venerem et adultria nefanda prolapsi sunt.*)

The religious houses, at this period, possessed manners as bad as those of the king's court; the Church had fallen into the same degree of decadence as Knighthood, and all society appeared to be going to dissolution. We have no desire to enter the

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\*The knights were a very virtuous race,  
 And full of chivalry in love,  
 Loyal, secret, of jovial grace,  
 Each would die for his lady friend's glove;  
 And they lived together most royally,  
 Loving the ladies loyally,  
 With never a slander and never a brawl,  
 But living most royally, loyally,  
 For the good old days were the best of all!

convents except to lift the veil which covered the vices of the monks and the *nonnains*. Prostitution had taken possession of the Lord's house, as it had of the great of the earth. The preachers in those days frequently repeated the words of the Angel in the Apocalypse: "Come and I will show you the condemnation of the great Prostitute, who is seated upon the great waters, with whom the kings of the earth are corrupted, and who has made drunk with the wine of Prostitution the inhabitants of the earth." Nothing, as a matter of fact, could portray the abominations of the reign of Charles VI, when clergy, nobility and the people vied with one another in perversity and turpitude. What must have been the life of the court, when the life of the convents was as deplorable as Nicolas de Clémenges, archdeacon of Bayeux, pictures it for us in his treatise *De Corrupto Statu Ecclesiae*: "Speaking of the virgins consecrated to the Lord, we must describe all the infamies of the places of Prostitution, all the ruses and effrontery of the courtesans, all their execrable works of fornication and of incest; for, I beg of you, what are today (about 1400) the monasteries of women if not sanctuaries devoted to the cult of Venus, rather than to that of the true God; if not impure resorts, where undisciplined youth abandons itself to all the disorders of lust, so that now, taking the veil for a young girl, is the same as exposing her publicly in a place of abomination!"\* Nicolas de Clémenges pushes to the point of hyperbole his criticism of monastic manners, but the demoralization of the ecclesiastics was only too striking, and it would be hard to say whether it was the Church which demoralized Chivalry or Chivalry which demoralized the Church. Dulaure, whose statements are generally to be suspected, supports himself with respectable authority in sketching for us this picture of clerical and knightly manners. "The prelates and the subordinate priests were clad ordinarily in secular habits, wore the sword, jousted in tournaments, frequented wine shops and entertained concu-

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\*Cf. Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, "The Life of Nuns," the story called "The Novice's Feast" in my translation: "If you had lovers before, what made a nun of you?"

bines. The priests and the curés were occupied in judiciary employments, loaned money at usury, and indulged in debauchery and excesses at table. In certain dioceses, the great vicars received permission to permit adultery during the space of one year; in others, one might purchase the right to fornicate with impunity throughout the course of a lifetime; the purchaser was quit of all obligations, by paying each year, to the officials, a quart of wine, and when age no longer permitted his use of this privilege, he was none the less required to pay this tax." It was in the decretals of the popes that officialdom found this strange power which it arrogated to itself with regard to the sin of impurity. The canon, *De Dilectissimis* exorts Christians to the practice of this axiom: *Everything is common among friends*; even women, it was added. An audacious request was even presented to Pope Sixtus IV to obtain his permission to permit the infamous sin during the canicular months, and Sixtus IV wrote at the bottom of the requests: "Let it be done as is requested" (*Hist. de France*, by the Abbé Velly, Vol. V, p. 10 and following).

It is a truly remarkable fact that the royal and municipal ordinances against Prostitution were never more frequent nor more severe than during this period of disorder. No pity was shown towards public women, even while decency and modesty appear to have been banished from manners, and while dissolute vestments alone were in the mode, in spite of the sumptuary edicts. The women had adopted once more, along with shoes *a la poulaine*, those obscene ornaments which they wore as decorations in the twelfth century at the court of Normandy, according to Orderic Vital, and the ornaments in question were still longer and more suggestive. The women, it is true, did not dare to adopt the accessories to this villainous footgear; but, on the other hand, they had robes that were split\* or elevated, and which permitted a glimpse of the leg and even of the naked buttocks; as to the throat, they revealed that down to the breast.

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\*Cf. our "slit skirt," which enjoyed a brief vogue some years ago.



The author of the *Chastoiement des Dames*, Robert de Blois, reproaches them for these immodest fashions.\*

*Aucune lesse differmée  
Sa poitrine, pource c'on doine  
Comme fetement sa chair planchoie;  
Une autre lesse tout de gré  
Sa chair apparoir au costé:  
Une ses jambes trop descuevre.  
Prud hom ne loe pas cette oeuvre.†*

The ceremonies of the Church, the processions especially, shared in this immodesty of vestments. One might see, in the processions and the public penitential demonstrations, men and women entirely naked: "Among these penitents," says the prejudiced author of the *Histoire de Paris*, "some wore chains of stones on their chemises; others, without chemises, were flagellated or pricked on the rump with needles." Here Dulaure is inventing nothing, exaggerating nothing, and he may send his reader with confidence to the *Glossary* of Ducange and Carpentier (to the words, *penitentiae*, *processiones*, *villaniae*, *lapides catenatos ferre*, *putagium*, *naticae*, etc.). We may suppose that the penitents who followed the processions in a state of complete nudity, and who had themselves pricked with needles, must have been prostitutes, as well as those who wore stones in their chemises. Such, as a matter of fact, were the customary punishments which secular justice decreed with regard to adulteresses and women of evil life. Dulaure furnishes us a memorable example, which he borrows from the criminal records of the Parliament of Paris (*Registre VIII*). Anne Piedeleu, an amorous woman, kept a place of debauchery in the rue Saint-Martin; she was, therefore, a violator of the provost's ordinances; and the provost who was then in office (1373), the famous Hugues Aubriot, saw to it that these ordinances were executed with much

\*Cf. the complaints made against the modern "flapper's" fashions.

†See page 569.

vigor. The bourgeoisie of the neighborhood went to denounce Anne Piedeleu to the provost, and at once the sergeants proceeded to dislodge the former, showing her some indulgence, since she was not even led to prison. She must have felt that she had the support of some personage capable of facing the provost, for she lodged a counter complaint against this magistrate, accusing him of a number of crimes and producing false witnesses in order to undo him. Parliament in the month of February, 1374, upon the representations of the king's advocate condemned Anne Piedeleu to be promenaded through the city, wholly nude, and wearing upon her head a crown of parchment, on which was written this word: *faussaire* (perjurer). She was led in this state to the pillory of the Halles, where she was exposed for two hours to the gaze of the people; she only left prison to be banished from Paris and from the realm. Promenades of this sort must have been frequent enough, and the populace ran to them with a joyous transport. As the ribaudes and the maquerelles who had been given over to the indecent curiosity of the idlers of Paris went shivering with cold and frequently coughing as they traversed the mud of the streets through the inclemencies of the weather, the spectators, and especially the children, were in the habit of singing a song composed for the occasion. This smutty song, which remained for long in the memory of the people, ended in this refrain, as reported in the *Journal du Bourgeois de Paris*:

*Votre c. . . . a la toux, commère,  
Votre c. . . . a la toux, la toux!‡*

It was quite natural for the most impudent of the women who were thus led to the pillory to respond to the singers with insults, insults not lacking in implications and maledictions. Also, when an epidemic cough made its appearance in Paris during the winter of the year 1413, those who had not yet contracted this cruel cough, or who had been cured of it, jocosely accused those whom they heard coughing of "bursting the geni-

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‡See page 585.

tals" (*rompre les genitoires*), and would say to them *par esbattements*: "So you have it? By my faith! You must have been singing '*Votre c. . . a la toux, commère.*'"\* Allusion was thus made to maladies of all sorts, such as the *mal saint-main*, the leprosy, the itch, the cough, etc., such as the unfortunate ones led away to the pillory were in the habit of wishing for their untimely banterers. No compassion was felt for these sinners, as we have observed, and the small children were the most stubborn in persecuting them. The authorities believed they were conforming to a unanimous sentiment in not according the least indulgence to these poor women, and yet there was one provost of Paris who took them under his protection, and who gave them, perhaps, too much support. This was Ambroise de l'Ore, Baron of Juilly, who was named provost in 1436, and who died in 1445 while discharging the duties of his office. The people of the capital could not forgive him for having favored Prostitution, by permitting the ancient regulations to fall into desuetude. So long as his administration lasted, the prostitutes were almost free; they dressed themselves as they pleased, and lodged everywhere in the city. Ambroise de l'Ore, on his deathbed, repented of having been so paternal toward these creatures, and he endeavored to repair the wrong he had done to the policing of manners. "The week before the Ascension," relates the Bourgeois de Paris in his *Journal*, "it was cried throughout Paris that the ribaudes might no longer wear rosaries of silver nor reversed collars nor *pennes de gris* on their robes nor *menuvair*, and that they should go to dwell in the *borderaulx*, ordained as these had been for them, in times past." This tardy satisfaction accorded to public opinion could not make the latter forget the scandals which had gone before, and when Ambroise de l'Ore died a few days afterward, the Bourgeois de Paris took it upon himself to deliver his funeral oration, and pictured him as "less loving the

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\*Cf. in the *Ragionamenti*, Nanna's cough, the story entitled "The Best Profession" in my translation: "This fig-bush of mine certainly hasn't known how to keep the sun." (I *Ragionamenti*, Part I, Third Day, "The Life of Courtezans.")

common good than any provost there had been before him for forty years.” The Bourgeois adds that this provost had one of the most beautiful and most decent women in the world, but, nevertheless, “he was so luxurious that it was said of a truth that he had three or four concubines by common law and supported everywhere the light women, of whom there were too many at Paris, by his laxity, and thereby acquired a very ill renown among all the people; for one could scarcely have the law on light women, so much did he support them and their maquerelles.”

Ambroise de l’Ore, before being provost of Paris and relaxing the bridle on the *light* women, had been one of the bravest knights of the *ost* of Charles VII, but his prowess at arms had not rendered him any the more virtuous, although he was the contemporary of a number of good knights of exemplary life and decent manners. He had passed his youth at the court of Charles VI, where knighthood was looked upon as consisting of tournaments and masquerades; he did not belong to that family of chaste and continent knights, who, like the maréchal de Boucicaut, thought that “lust is more than anything in the world contrary to a valiant man-at-arms.” The *bon mesire* Jehan le Maingre, called Boucicaut, did not forsake his continence when he became governor of Genoa, where the occasions of pleasure were numberless. “The virtues which are contrary to lubricity are in him,” remarked his secretary-biographer; “he does not think of debauching the Genoans, for he is like stone, notwithstanding the fact that the ladies there are well adorned and well attired, and that there are many beautiful ones among them.” One day when he was riding with his gentlemen in the city of Genoa, a lady who had painted her hair blonde came to the window to see him pass; he paid no attention; but one of his squires remarked her, and could not refrain from saying: “Oh! what a beauty!” the maréchal appeared not to hear; but when the squire turned once more to look at the lady, he said to him with a glacial glance, “That is enough!” The biographer who has recorded these *feats* of Boucicaut adds this reflection: “Thus, in fact and in appear-



ance, the maréchal is clean of that vice of carnality and of all superfluity, which is a perfect sign of continence."

Boucicaut, it is true, had been reared at the court of Charles V, who, among all his other virtues, according to his historiographer, Christine de Pisan, "loved that of chastity which was by him guarded in fact, in saying and in thought." Charles V, so severe as he was with himself on this point, was equally severe toward his servants, and desired that they should be chaste "as much in continence as in habits, words and deeds, and all things." When he learned that one of his officers had dishonored a woman, even though the officer was his favorite, he drove the officer from his presence and dispensed forever with his service. And yet, he was not lacking in Christian charity toward sinners, and, "considering human fragility," he would never consent to a husband's "immuring his wife in perpetual penitence for a misdeed of her body." He merely permitted the husband to keep her locked in a room, if she had been too greatly dishonored, in order that she might not become a shame to her husband and to her relatives. He forbade indecent books to be introduced and read at the court of the Queen and the Princes. It was reported to him one day that a knight of the court had "instructed the Dauphin in love" (*instruit le dauphin à amour et vagueté*); he sent for this knight and forbade him ever to appear again before his wife and children. Christine de Pisan, who has reported these details in the *Livre des Faits et Donnes Moeurs du Feu Roi Charles*, informs us that he would not permit at table the *gouliars de bouche*, *aportant paroles vagues*, and that he regarded the playing of fiddlers as "introductions to lust" (*introductions a la luxure*); he frequently repeated the word of St. Paul in the *Epistle to the Corinthians*: "Evil words corrupt good manners." The reign of Charles VI and a part of that of Charles VII were dishonored by all the vices and all the crimes which Charles V had endeavored to banish from his realm; and Prostitution, which this wise King everywhere repressed by his example, no longer knew any barriers or limits.

In order to form an idea of the degree of perversity at which some of the nobles had arrived, some of the great lords, who abandoned themselves to all the aberrations of debauchery, we must read, in the Archives of Nantes, the criminal trial of Gilles de Retz, maréchal de France, condemned to the flames in 1440. Gilles de Retz was one of the most puissant lords of Brittany; he had valiantly served Charles VII during the war with the English; he had fought with Dunois\* and Lahire, under the banner of Jeanne d'Arc; he was lettered and learned. But the reading of Suetonius had excited him to imitate the monstrous debaucheries of the Roman emperors; like Tiberius and Nero,† he had a passion for blood mingled with ordure; he had no other pastime than forcing his abominable caresses upon the poor children whom he caused to be kidnapped on all sides; when they were handsome and *jolites*, he attached them to his person or strangled them with his own hands. Superstition and magic aided him in his cruelties and defilements; he had a magnificent chapel, with choristers and canons whom he kept well, and, at the same time, he had sorcerers and magicians in his pay, with whom he indulged in invocations to the Devil.‡ This execrable fellow, who in more ways than one was like another wicked wretch whose acquaintance we shall later make (the Marquis de Sade), was finally brought to justice, arrested with his principal agents and judged by an extraordinary tribunal, named for this purpose by the Duke of Brittany, his cousin. The inquiry revealed horrors which confirmed the depositions of the witnesses. There were found, in the subterranean passages of the châteaux of Chantoce, Suze, Ingrande, etc., the calcinated bones and cinders of children whom the maréchal de Retz had assassinated, after abusing them. He was not backward about confessing everything, and not being

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\*Le beau et jeune Dunois'' of the old song (''Partant pour la Syrie'').

†For a modern, scholarly and corrective view of Gilles de Retz or Gilles de Rais (Gilles de Raiz), see: ''La Vie et la Mort de Gilles de Raiz (Dit a Tort ''Barbebleue''), par Emile Gabory, Perrin et cie., Paris, 1926. M. Gabory attacks, among other things, the false identification of Gilles with ''Bluebeard.'' In his preface, he has an interesting comparison of Gilles de Raiz with Nero and other villains of history.

‡The ''black mass'' motive.

able to hope for grace from any tribunal of men, he demanded pardon of the eternal Judge, before whom he knew he would have to appear.\*

The depositions of the accomplices of Gilles de Retz initiate us into the horrible scenes of which the old château de Chantoce was the theater. Henriët, chamberlain of the maréchal, declared "that Gilles de Sille and Pontou have given a number of small children to the said Sire de Rais in his chamber, with which small children he had cohabitation and warmed himself with them, committing an act of nature upon their bellies, and taking with them his pleasure and delectation; that he never had cohabitation with one of the said children except once or twice, and that afterwards the sire would sometimes with his own hand cut their throats, and sometimes, Gilles de Sille, Henriët and Pontou would cut them in the chamber of the said sire, and that the blood would flow over the place, which was afterwards cleansed; and that these children, once dead, were burned in the said chamber of the said sire, after he had gone to bed, and the powder of them was thrown away; and that the said sire took greater pleasure in cutting their throats than in having cohabitation with them." Henriët, interrogated regarding these infamous mysteries, completed his first confession with new details; he related "having heard the said sire de Rais say that it was very easy to see the heads of children cut off, after having had cohabitation with them on their bellies, having their legs between his own, and sometimes he would sit upon the bellies of the said children, while their heads were separated from their bodies, and other times he would cut their throats from the rear in order to cause them to languish, in which he took great pleasure, and as they languished, he would sometimes have cohabitation with them, to the moment of death, and sometimes after they were dead, while they were still warm; and he had a broadsword with which to cut off their heads, and whenever these children were not handsome enough

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\*See the superb and really touching description of the trial scene in Huysmans' "La-Bas." Lacroix, for all we know, may have been one of the sources from which Huysmans got his "documentation."

for this pleasure, he would cut off their heads himself with the said broadsword, and afterwards he would have cohabitation with them. He said that no man on the planet could know or do what he did.\* Sometimes the sire would have the said infants dismembered by their armpits, and he would take pleasure in seeing the blood.

*“Item, this sire, in order to prevent the said infants from crying aloud when he desired to have cohabitation with them, would first have a cord put about their necks and hang them up, at a distance of three feet in height, in a corner of his chamber, and before they were dead, he would have them let down, telling them that they were not to say a word but that they were to warm his member, by holding it in their hands; and afterwards, he would commit an act of nature upon their bellies, and this done, he would have their throats cut, and their heads separated from their bodies.”* These frightful confessions were confirmed by Étienne Cornillaut, called Pontou, the favorite of the maréchal, and one of his accomplices. Pontou did not wait until he was questioned to confess the crimes of his master and his own crimes; he added a few new facts to those which Henriët had revealed. Thus, the Sire de Retz was in the habit of giving two or three crowns for each infant that was procured for him; sometimes he himself would choose the children and have them brought secretly to one of his châteaux. *“He took sometimes little girls, with whom he would have cohabitation upon the belly, as well as male infants, saying that he thereby found a greater pleasure and less annoyance. When two children were brought to him together, so that one might not cry for the other, after having taken satisfaction with the one, he would keep the other until his appetite had returned.”* Gilles de Retz, after depositions so explicit as these, had nothing to do but admit their sincerity. He confessed, then, having abused infants, *“for his own ardor and the delectation of lust, and of having had them slain by his people, either by cutting their throats by daggers and knives, by*

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\*Cf. the now famous Leopold-Loeb case and the attitude of the defendants



separating their heads from their bodies, or by breaking their heads by blows of a club or other object. And sometimes he would remove their members, or cause them to be removed, and would split them open in order to have their entrails, and would have them attached to an iron cross, in order to strangle them or cause them to languish, and as they languished at the point of death, he would have cohabitation with them, and sometimes after they were dead, he would kiss them, and would take pleasure in looking upon the most beautiful heads of the said infants, which afterward were burned." He was asked when and how he had come to conceive these unheard-of atrocities for the first time; he replied "that he had begun this mode of life at Chantoce, the year his grandfather, the Sire de la Suze, died, and that of himself and out of his own head, without the counsel of any other, he had formed the imagination of doing this, solely for pleasure and the delectation of lust, without other intention."

In listening to these avowals, uttered with the calmest air, the judges trembled on their seats and crossed themselves at every instant. This monster was condemned, along with his accomplices, but he was not afraid, and paternally encouraged the latter to make a good death, in order that they might all see each other again "in the great joy of Paradise" (*en la grand joie du Paradis*). He underwent the supreme penalty on the 26th of October, 1440, in a prairie situated above the bridges of Nantes; and after he had been strangled upon the lighted pyre, his body was given to his family, and "damoiselles of great estate" (*damoiselles de grand estat*) came to seek this defiled body to wrap it in a shroud and to bear it solemnly to the church of Carmes, where it was interred, the spectators being left with a memory of Gilles de Retz' *repentance* and his Christian end.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE appearance, or rather the development of the venereal maladies in France, as in the whole of Europe, changed in a manner the aspect of legal Prostitution and tended to its definite overthrow. Observing that these terrible maladies were attacking all society at its very root, the most enlightened men and those who were the freest from prejudice could not but believe that public debauchery was the unique cause of such a scourge, whereas, on the other hand, the simple-minded and the credulous looked upon this scourge as a punishment from Heaven, striking with incontinence those whom Heaven held most dear. Then the magistrates began to repent of having authorized and organized the practice of a sin which carried with it such fatal consequences, and the first remedy which they endeavored to oppose to the invasion of this new plague, was the suspension of those rules of tolerance by virtue of which there was in every city a permanent seat of morbid infection. But it soon became to be looked upon as futile to endeavor to halt the course of Prostitution when it was recognized that the source of the evil was not to be found alone in the bad houses. Certain sanitary police measures which had not before been employed were put into effect, and the dissolute women of the community were subjected to a medical examination. This resulted in a notable betterment of the regime of pornographic tolerance, and from this period, the municipal administration seriously concerned itself with the public health in all those delicate cases which theretofore had been looked upon as cases merely involving public morality and public order.

We must here treat of the origin of syphilis, since circumstances had caused the name, *mal Francais*, to be given to it at the moment of its appearance in Europe, and since this name, as

a matter of fact, was associated with the events which accompanied its entrance into France; but we purpose first to pursue a line of reasoning which we have already entered into regarding the antiquity of these venereal maladies. Undoubtedly, these maladies, like the majority of epidemics and contagions, underwent a multitude of metamorphoses, especially in their symptoms, by reason of the variety of local, natural and atmospheric conditions which accompanied their birth; undoubtedly, this hideous scourge, which science, after three centuries and a half of profound studies, still regards as an insatiable proteus, did not possess before the year 1493 or 1496 the frightful character, and especially the infectious virus, which was observed for the first time at that period, when exceptional cases came to be common ones. The venereal malady, the same malady, had always existed from the most remote antiquity, as we have demonstrated, and it would have occasioned no more alarm than did any other chronic malady, if a combination of unforeseen circumstances had not suddenly communicated to it a means of propagating itself, of multiplying and becoming aggravated with a sort of fury. We have proved, from the evidence of Celsus, of Areteus and the most illustrious Greek and Roman physicians, that the true syphilis which authorities insist upon making contemporary with the discovery of America, was at Rome the inevitable sequel of the leprosy and those cutaneous maladies which had been brought from Asia and Africa along with the spoils of conquered peoples. It is not difficult to understand, in going back to sources, how the frightful debauchery of the Romans had nourished the germs of all the venereal affections, and how new and unknown maladies had thereby been created. We persist in believing, however, that the transmission of the virus was not then as prompt or as frequent as it has since become in modern times; and it is probable, moreover, that the ancients who possessed more than five hundred species of washes for diseases of the eye, had also curative prescriptions for the infirmities of love. We shall have to observe, through the Middle Ages, the striking progress of the

venereal evil, under different names, until it attained its transformation with the name of *grosse vérole*.

This obscene malady has always existed in the chronic state with certain isolated individuals; it is reproduced by contagion, with a great variety of accidental characteristics, resulting from the temperament of the patients and deriving from a multitude of local circumstances which it would be impossible to enumerate or to describe; but it always finds its germ in unclean sexual relations, and it does not develop of itself without a preexisting and infectious cause. Prostitution was the most active of this libidinous leprosy, which was propagated with more or less malignity according to the country, the season, the patient, etc. At first it was but debauchees who were afflicted with this shameful evil, and the malady remained in a manner circumscribed and confined to these degraded beings who had no contact with decent folk. However, at certain epochs and by reason of a conglomeration of physiological facts, the malady became exasperated and exceeded its ordinary limits, by becoming associated with other epidemic or contagious maladies; it multiplied, then, with the most frightful symptoms, and threatened to poison the entire population, which it decimated. After having made manifest and hidden ravages, it would suddenly halt its course. It was never medicine which hindered its occult progress, and which combatted it by means of energetic remedies; it was religion, which ordained public penances, and which thus eliminated the perils of contagion by making a warfare on the sin which was its immediate cause. Absolute abstention from the joys of the flesh for a considerable period of time was the most efficacious remedy which the French clergy, or rather the episcopacy, so ingeniously far-sighted where the welfare of the people was concerned, had been able to conceive as an enemy to the progress of this pestilential scourge. During long crises of public health, legal Prostitution, it must be stated, disappeared completely. The bad houses were closed; the common women were forced, under pain of arbitrary punishment, to abandon their dangerous trade, and



the municipal police enacted proscriptions so severe on this point, that, from the beginning of an epidemic in the sixteenth century, all the suspected women were driven out or imprisoned and kept under lock and key until the malady had disappeared.

Let us not forget to remark that the climate of Gaul was only too favorable to all the pestilential maladies and all the affections of the skin. Immense swamps and impenetrable forests spread over all the land an unhealthy and putrid humidity, which the warmth of summer changed to deleterious miasmas. The soil, in place of being rendered more healthful by cultivation, gave forth the most morbid emanations. The mode of life of the inhabitants, moreover, was none too hygienic; they slept on the earth, on the skins of beasts, without any other shelter than their tents of hide or branches; they ate little bread and much meat, much fish, much salt flesh, for they raised great herds of black pigs in the druidic woods. It is not astonishing, therefore, that elephantiasis and the other hideous degenerescences of leprosy had already become well acclimated among the Gauls in the second century of the modern era. The learned Areteus, who would appear to have written under Trajan his treatise, *De Curatione Elephantiasis*, says that the Celts or Gauls possessed a number of remedies against this terrible malady, and that they especially employed little balls of nitre with which they rubbed their bodies in the bath. Marcellus Empiricus, who practiced medicine at Bordeaux at the time of the Emperor Gratin, reports that the physician Soranus had undertaken to cure, in the Province of Aquitaine alone, two hundred persons attacked with the mentagra and with sordid eruptions, which spread over all their bodies. We have proved that the venereal evil was but a form of leprosy contracted in the course of sexual relations. We have shown how the abominable aberrations of the senses, might, in exceptional cases, multiply a hundred times the strength of the virus, by carrying it to those parts of the organism which were the least able to withstand it. We have, finally, in treating of the origin of elephantiasis made use of those suppositions which

were put forward by the physicians of the fifteenth century on the occasion of the *mal de Naples*, in which were seen the monstrous effects of crime against nature.

It was during the sixth century that the venereal evil made its appearance in France\* as an epidemic; it was then called *lues inquinaria* or *inguinaria*. According to the first term, this malady was a defilement, possibly a gonorrhea such as the books of Moses describe *Leviticus*, Chapter XV); according to the second description of this malady, which Gregory of Tours frequently employs to indicate its nature, it was an inflammation of the groins, where it formed a malign ulcer which caused death after unheard-of sufferings. Dom Ruinart in his edition of the *History of Gregory of Tours*, notes that this inguinal ulcer slew the patient as a serpent might (*lues inguinaria sic dicebatur, quod, nascent in inguine vel in axilla, ulcere in modum serpentis interficeret*). The *Glossary* of Duncange records, in the edition of the Benedictines, the two names of this *pestilence*, which made its first appearance in 546, and which many times returned to the charge among those populations which were given over to the hideous distractions of unnatural debauchery. But the learned editors had neglected to facilitate the interpretation of these two names attributed to the same malady, by means of an illuminating comparison of passages in which there is question of this malady in the contemporary chroniclers. The infamous origin of this malady appears to us to be sufficiently indicated by the horror which it inspired and which was not dependent solely upon the fear of death, for those tainted with it appeared to have been struck by the hand of God as a punishment for their impurities; the bloated mess and purulence of the organs of generation, the buboes of the loins, the bloody flux of the intestines, the gangrenous abscesses on the buttocks spoke clearly enough as to the nature of this obscene contagion.

It reappeared with new symptoms in 945, after the invasion of the Normans, who, it is likely, were not strangers to it. Flo-

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\*Sic (J. U. N.)

doard abstains, however, from all immodest conjecture on this point: "About Paris and in divers places in its environs," he says in his *Chronicle*, "a number of men found themselves afflicted with a fire in divers parts of their bodies, which were insensibly consumed until death came to put an end to their punishment; of whom some retired into holy places to escape their torments; but the majority were cured at Paris in the church of the Holy Mother of God, Mary, in such a manner that all who were able to go there felt assured of being guaranteed against this pestilence, and the Duke Hugues every day gave them the wherewithal to live. There were some among them, who, desiring to return to their homes, felt in them a new conflagration of that fire which had been extinguished, and returning to this church, they were delivered." Sauval, who furnishes us this naïve translation, adds that, "since all the remedies served for nothing, recourse was had to the Virgin in the church of Notre-Dame, which served as a hospital on this occasion." We find, as a matter of fact, in the great *Pastoral* of this church, under date of 1248, a capitulary charter relating to six glowing lamps which were to light, night and day, the place where the poor dying ones, afflicted with this villainous malady, were lying pell-mell; this malady is referred to as the "sacred fire" (*ubi infirmi et morbo, qui ignis sacer vocatur, in ecclesiâ laborantes, consueverunt reponi*). The majority of authors who have spoken of this horrible malady, says the learned compiler of the *Memorial Portatif de Chronologie* (Volume II, page 893), are in agreement in attributing to it the same symptoms and the same effects. "Its invasion was sudden; it burned the entrails or all other parts of the body, which fell in shreds; under a livid skin, it consumed the flesh, separating the flesh from the bone. The most astonishing thing about this malady was that it produced no real heat, but penetrated with a glacial cold those whom it had attacked, while this mortal frigidity was succeeded by so great an ardor in the same parts that the patients experienced all the effects of a cancer." It is our opinion that the men of the North had left

as they passed this impure memento of their depraved manners, for the abominable disease which was their work generally afflicted only the masculine sex.

The *feu sacre* was only arrested in its progress by the sage counsels of the Church which took upon itself the task of curing the sick whom it had absolved; but the vice of the Normans had become inveterate in those provinces which they had invaded. The year 994 saw a rebirth of the *mal des ardents*, along with the criminal causes which had kindled it the first time, and this malady, transmitted by the most infectious form of debauchery, promptly passed from France into Germany and into Italy. The tenth century, was, moreover, all too propitious for all sorts of calamities which might strike the human species. It was generally believed that the year 1000 would mark the end of the world, and in this belief the wicked, who felt that they were destined to the flames of Hell, made what use they could of the time that was left them, by yielding with more fury than ever to their detestable habits. The continual rains, the excessive cold, and frequent floods aided the epidemics which were depopulating the earth. The fields, no longer cultivated, became barren heaths, swamps and morasses, the emanations of which infected the air. Fish perished in the rivers, animals in the woods, and all these putrid cadavers exhaled poisonous vapors which engendered a multitude of maladies. The *mal des ardents* began once more its harvest of men throughout France. The King of France, Hugh Capet, himself succumbed to it, a victim of the wholly paternal care with which he had ministered to the sick. These latter almost all died, since they had given the malady time to take deep root in their atrophied organisms. This frightful contagion, against which the art of the physician declared itself impotent, since vice always aided the disease, had received the name of *mal sacre*, on account of its accursed origin. For, says the *Book De l'Excellence de Sainte Geneviève*, "in the formation of names, a thing is frequently given a name which is the contrary of what is meant (*morbis igneus, quem physici sacrum ig-*



*nem appellant eâ nominum institutione, quâ nomen unius contrarii alterius significationem sortitur*). It is certain that public opinion, without being any too well informed as to the nature of the malady, attributed its invasion to a chastisement of Heaven and its cure to the intercession of the Virgin and the Saints. There were undoubtedly ecclesiastics who debaptized the *mal sacre*, to give it, as a brand of shame, the name of *mal des ardents*, which the people afterward changed into *mal de Saint Main* and into *feu de Saint Antoine* (fire of St. Anthony), for the reason that these two Saints had had the honor of curing or of relieving many of the victims. Pope Urban II, informed of the miracles which the faithful reported as the result of the intercession of St. Anthony, founded under the auspices of this Saint, a religious order, the fathers of which were charged with the exclusive care of the victims of the *mal des ardents*. Let us not forget, in connection with this foundation, to recall the fact that the pig, which is subject to the leprosy, and whose flesh also transmits leprosy when one eats no other food, became at about this period, the symbolic animal of St. Anthony. Finally, a simple imprecation preserved in the vocabulary of the people down to the time of Rabelais, who has recorded it, relieves us of the necessity of proving that the fire of St. Anthony had a most infamous origin. The people and Rabelais still remarked in the sixteenth century: "May the fire of St. Anthony burn your guts! (*Que le feu Saint-Antoine vous arde le boyau culier!*)"

There were a number of other memorable recrudescences of this malady, notably in 1043 and in 1089; the last appears to have been that of 1130, under the reign of Louis VI. "A strange malady ran through the city of Paris and other neighboring places," relates Dubreul, which the vulgar named the sacred fire or the *mal des ardents*, on account of the interior violence of the malady, which burned the entrails of the one who was struck with it, with an incessant ardor the cause of which the physicians could not conceive and as a consequence were unable to remedy." St. Anthony did not have, this time, the exclusive

privilege of prayers, offerings and cures. St. Geneviève, the patron Saint of Paris, and Saint Marcel interposed to abate the plague. From this epoch, the little chapel of the Saint in the city was transformed into a church under the title of Saint-Geneviève-des-Ardents, which remained for a long time after the malady had been restricted to a few isolated cases. The first victims of the syphilis in the fifteenth century went to this old church to seek curative miracles. Tradition recognized in these new ones who called upon St. Geneviève the direct heirs of those who formerly suffered from the *mal des ardents*; by the same law of inheritance, the other Saints, such as St. Anthony, St. Main, St. Job, etc., who had formerly been invoked for the cure of the leprous and mangy maladies, now resumed their old attributes with regard to the venereal malady, properly so-called, which, however, was not a new one for them. But from the end of the twelfth century up to the appearance of the *mal de Naples*, all the shameful maladies, born of or aggravated by impure sexual relations, were absorbed by the hydra of leprosy, which reared its head on all sides and which was propagated under the most varied forms. The leprosy of the twelfth century, whether or not it had a venereal origin, owed a heavy debt to Prostitution for the threatening progress which it made at this period, a progress which all the governments did their best to stop by means of similar police and public health measures. We do not hesitate to advance the theory that the relaxation of these measures gave birth to the syphilis of the fifteenth century.

We are not to deduce from the silence of medical annals for five or six hundred years that the leprosy, last described by Paul d'Egine, in the sixth century, had disappeared in Europe up to the eleventh century, when we behold it breaking out with renewed fury. A history of private life in the Middle Ages would be an irrefutable monument to the continued existence of elephantiasis (since the causes which produced this parent form of leprosy existed then in the highest degree); even if the ecclesiastical writings were not filled with statements which tend to con-

firm this fact; the collection of the Bollandists and the cartularies of the churches and the monasteries make frequent mention of lepers. Gregory of Tours says that they had at Paris a sort of asylum where they cleansed their bodies and where they dressed their wounds. Pope St. Gregory, in his writings, pictures a leper who had been disfigured by the malady *quem densis vulneribus morbus elephantinus defoedaverat*. Elsewhere, he tells us that two monks contracted the same malady, from having slain a bear (*pour avoir tué un ours*), which afflicted them in such a manner that their members rotted and fell off. In the eighteenth century, Nicolas, Abbot of Corbie, caused a lazaret house to be constructed, which is sufficient proof that the lepers were then very numerous. The law of Rotharis, King of the Lombards, under date of 630, formed a basis of all legislation on the subject. Everywhere, the leper was cut off from the bosom of society, which looked upon him as a dead man; and if misery forced him to live by means of alms, he still did not approach anyone, but announced his presence with the sound of a wooden stick. Despite these legislative precautions, the lepers sometimes succeeded in hiding the sorry state of their health, and even contracted marriage with healthy persons; hence the capitulary of Pepin for the dissolution of these marriages in 737. Another capitulary of Charlemagne, in 789, forbids lepers, under the severest penalties, to frequent the company of healthy folk. It may readily be understood that sexual relations were the most dangerous auxiliary to contagion, which, however, did not spread too widely, thanks to the general horror which lepers inspired, thanks, above all, to the preventive intervention of the municipal police.

But, as we have already observed, it was the ecclesiastical influence which had the greatest effect upon manners and their consequences; a sort of hygienic regime was frequently a part of penitence, and the confessional took the place of medical consultations. The priest concerned himself with the physical as with the moral health of his flock, and he was only able to keep

them in the right path by threatening them with those hideous evils which the punishment of God sent as a means of reprobation for libertines and the infamous. The epidemics coincided always with the periods of social corruption, and a disorderly state of public manners inevitably brought with it a loss on the side of sanitary economy. The respectable classes were stupefied at being themselves afflicted with impure maladies, which must have been endemic among the immense throng of beggars, vagabonds, debauchees and lost women, wandering through the fields, or relegated to the Courts of Miracles. It was from debauchery and misery that the venereal malady drew its most characteristic symptoms and to them that it owed its most hideous metamorphoses. Never did a *mire* or a *physician* penetrate these inaccessible retreats to study there the nameless maladies which were prevalent and which were frequently complicated in monstrous ways, one disease mingling with another and one incessantly devouring the other. It is certain that the wretches who led this vagabond (*truande*) existence had no contact with the healthy and respectable population, except at certain periods of crisis and disorder, after which the wave of impurity would return to its bed and leave to time, to religion and to the human police the task of effacing its vestiges. It was thus that leprosy suddenly spread, like a torrent which had broken its banks, across the body social, which it would have poisoned, if the prudence and the energy of those in power had not erected a barrier against the invasions of the malady. The Crusades had brought together, so to speak, all the dregs of society, and mingled, in a strange upheaval, the nobility with the people. The police regulations were unable to sustain the shock of this army of pilgrims, who went to die or to seek fortune in the Orient. The most audacious Prostitution ate its way like a gangrene among these undisciplined hordes. Upon their return, after their adventures in Palestine, all the poor Crusaders were more or less suspected of having the leprosy, or *méleserie*; some of them green lepers, the others white; the majority of them brought back the bitter fruits



of oriental debauchery; the assurance then grew that the venereal malady was but one of the forms of leprosy.

It was necessary to submit the lepers to a rigorous policing for purposes of public health, which was renewed three centuries later against the *véroles*, and which had for object the prevention of the contagion from spreading still further. As in the code of Rotharis, the leper was looked upon as a dead man from the moment he entered the lazar house, accompanied by exorcisms and funereal rites. The curé would three times hurl the earth of the cemetery upon his head, addressing to him these lugubrious injunctions: "See that you do not enter any house; when you speak to anyone, you shall go against the wind. When you demand alms, you shall sound with your stick. You shall not go far from your dwelling without your habit of a *bon malade*. You shall not look into or draw from a well or a fountain, unless it is one of your own," etc. He was further forbidden to walk with bare feet, to pass through narrow streets, to touch children, to spit in the air, to brush against walls, doors or trees in passing, to sleep along the roads, etc. When he came to die, he did not even find a burial place among Christians, and his companions in misery were compelled to inter him in the lepers' cemetery. Never might a leper, even though he had been cured, enter the circle of the *moli mondaine* and live in the interior of the city under the common regime. There were, however, many degrees of the malady, which was not absolutely incurable, and which did not always make its appearance by means of obvious signs; but since it afflicted by preference the poorest classes, the physicians cared no more about treating it than the victims did about being treated. The latter, whether they were lepers by birth or by accident, looked upon themselves as devoted irrevocably to the disease and so resigned themselves as a prey to the ravages of this frightful infirmity, which, from lack of treatment, merely grew and was exasperated, until it destroyed all the vital organs. Sometimes, the disease was stationary, and although its germ remained in the individual, its effects were paralyzed or halted

by a good constitution or from some other inappreciable cause. All commerce with professional lepers was forbidden healthy persons, by reason of the disgust and terror which the lepers excited, rather than by reason of the law, which segregated them under pain of death. But by way of compensation, the lepers enjoyed a free communication among themselves; they had their own wives, children and *menages*; they did not feel themselves strangers to any of the feelings which prompt mankind to reproduce himself, and it was thus that their race came to be perpetuated in the midst of a population which avoided their sight and their approach; it was thus that leprosy passed from generation to generation and laid hold of the child in the belly of the mother. The lepers, however, did not multiply as might have been expected, for the germ of death which they carried with them, decimated their ranks unceasingly, after changing them into perambulating corpses. The son of a leper was ordinarily more leprous than his father, and the disease being transmitted in this manner, took on a new force in place of being weakened. The most numerous family was consumed by it in the space of a century. That was why leprosy itself almost disappeared along with the lepers at the end of a number of centuries, although the majority of the victims were sexually very ardent, and very apt at procreating their kind.

The most general characteristic of the leprosy was an eruption of pimples all over the body, notably on the face; but these pimples, which were constantly renewed, were distinguished by a variety of forms and colors: some were hard and dry; others soft and purulent; some crusted, some creviced; black, red, yellow, green, all hideous to the sight and to the smell. As to the uniform signs of the malady, the celebrated Guy de Chauliac counted six principal manifestations, which Laurent Joubert defines in these terms, in his *Grande Chirurgie*, in the chapter on leprosy: "Eating away of the eyes and the ears, depilation and enlargement or tuberosity of the brows, dilation of the nostrils without and constriction within, disfiguration of the lips, raucous

and nasal voice, malodorous breath and person, fixed and horrible look.” Guy de Chauliac, who lived in the fourteenth century, had under his eyes a multitude of subjects, which was not the case with Laurent Joubert, who wrote upon leprosy at the end of the sixteenth century, when it no longer existed except in name. The equivocal signs of leprosy were sixteen in number: “The first is induration and tuberosity of the flesh, especially of the joints and extremities; the second is the dark and shady color of morpheus; the third is the falling out of the hair; the fourth, consumption of the muscles and principally of the thumb; fifth, insensibility, stupor, and cramps in the extremities; sixth, itching and pimples, copperous ulcerations on the body; seventh, grains under the tongue, under the eyebrows and behind the ears; eighth, heat and a feeling of pricking on the body; ninth, crisping of the skin like a feather when exposed to the air; tenth, a greasy appearance when subjected to water; eleventh, general absence of fever; twelfth, mad and deceitful character and desire to meddle with other people; thirteenth, nightmares and bad dreams; fourteenth, weak pulse; fifteenth, black, leaden and dark-colored blood, ashy, gravelous and grumous; sixteenth, livid urine, white, solid and ashy.” We shall see later that these symptoms are almost identical with those of the *grosse vérole*, which was but a renaissance of the leprosy, under the influence of the Italian wars.

The leprosy had an infinite number of other special characteristics, determined by local and climatic circumstances. For example, *the mal des ardents*, which had degenerated into a virulent gonorrhea, might come from cohabitation with a leprous person. In this malady, which was called *l'ardeur*, *l'arsure*, *l'incendie*, *l'échauffaison* (in English, *brenning*), the genital parts were attacked with phlogosis, erysipelas, ulcerations, blisters, etc., and the patient experienced a lively pain in urinating. A learned physician of the thirteenth century, Theodoric, says in Book VI of his *Surgery* that whoever approaches a woman who has known a leper contracts a bad disease (*mauvais mal*). In a

treatise on Surgery attributed to Roger Bacon, who wrote at the same period, we find a description of the horrible maladies which might follow impure relations of this sort. A number of contemporary physicians have studied this species of venereal infection, which reigned in London in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as we shall see when we come to speak of England. One of these physicians, John of Gaddesden, devotes a chapter of his *Practica Medicinæ Seu Rosa Anglicana* to the accidents which result from the immodest frequentation of lepers, male and female. "He who has slept with a woman," he says, "with whom a leper has had intercourse feels prickings over his flesh and sometimes hot flashes over all his body." The English physicians of that time give us a number of details regarding the venereal leprosy which the French and Italian physicians do not, for the reason that the laws against lepers were a good deal more rigorous in England than anywhere else; also the cases of leprous contagion were more common there and of graver import than in any other country.

Thanks to the energetic and widespread measures which were taken throughout Europe, except possibly in England, with the object of arresting leprosy and related maladies, the major portion of the population might be assured of remaining safe and sound. In the time of Matthieu Paris, who wrote in the middle of the thirteenth century, there were more than 19,000 lazaret houses in Europe. Two centuries later, the lazaret houses of France were abandoned and in ruin from lack of patients. They were taken possession of by parasites, who suppressed the titles of foundation and the rental contracts; so that it was almost in vain for Francis I, by his ordinance of 1543, to institute a search for these lost or stolen titles and charters.

It is, then, certain that in the interval of two or three centuries, the great leprosy or elephantiasis had almost completely disappeared, along with the unfortunate ones who were afflicted with it, and who had not succeeded in propagating their kind throughout three or four generations. As to the little leprosy



and its derivatives, they were disguised under less disturbing forms and became progressively weaker in their external symptoms, although the germ was always active in blood which had received it from birth or by contagious transmission. Society, which had rejected lepers from its bosom, found itself invaded by them anew, or at least by their children, and leprosy, in losing some of its hideous phenomena, began again to menace public health. It was by means of Prostitution that this infamous malady made its return among the abject classes and crept into the higher classes in the form of hidden metamorphoses. We do not doubt that the *mal de Naples*, which was never anything else than a resurrection of leprosy, combined with other maladies, had silently pursued its way in the houses of debauchery, and in the mysterious retreats of immodesty, before breaking out in the light of open day under the name of the *grosse vérole*, spreading over all Europe at once.

We shall speak later of the arsure, which had infected the bad houses of London, to such a degree that it was necessary, in 1430, to enact laws restraining these houses, under penalty of a fine, from receiving any woman tainted with the disease and providing for the proper treatment of those who had been attacked by the detestable malady (*infirmity nefanda*, say the sanitary laws, cited by William Beckett in Volume XXX of the *Transactions Philosophiques*). Following are the statements of a number of physicians and surgeons, statements which do not permit us to believe that the venereal maladies were merely contemporary with the discovery of America. Guillaume de Salicet, a physician of Plaisance, in the thirteenth century, does not forget in his Surgery, in the chapter entitled *De Apostemate in Inguinibus*, the bubo, *dragonneau* or abscess of the loins, which sometimes forms, he tells us, "when the man contracts a corruption in his member as the result of having had an affair with an improper woman." (*Traité des Malad. Vénér.*, by Astruc, translated by Louis, Volume I, page 134 and following.) The same practitioner, in another chapter, treats of the white and red pustules,

of the miliary pimple and of the crevices which occur on the member or about the prepuce, and which are occasioned by the "commerce which one had with a dirty or a public woman." Lanfranc, famous physician and surgeon of Milan, who came to take up his residence in Paris about 1395, develops the same doctrine with reference to the maladies of the shameful parts, in his book entitled *Practica Seu Ars Completa Chirurgiae*: "The ulcers of the member," he says, "are occasioned by the acrid humors which ulcerate the place where they are found, or by carnal conjunction with a dirty woman who has had an affair recently with a man attacked by a similar malady." Bernard Gordon, a not less celebrated member of the Faculty of Montpellier, who must have survived Lanfranc, holds the same opinions with regard to maladies of the virile member (*De Passionibus Virgae*), in his *Lilium Medicinae*: "These maladies are very numerous," he says, "such as abscesses, ulcers, chancres, swelling, pain and itching. Their causes are external or internal: among the external causes are a fall, a blow and carnal conjunction with a woman whose matrix is impure, full of saines or of virulence, or of flatulence, or of similar corrupt matters. But if the cause is internal, these maladies are then produced by certain corrupting and evil humors which descend from the member to the lower parts. John of Gaddesden, an English physician of the University of Oxford, Guy de Chauliac of the University of Montpellier, Valesius of Tarenta of the same University, and a number of other doctors who made their observations in different countries in the fourteenth century, all of them recognized the fact that impure relations engendered virulent maladies, which were contagious and which thus came to be venereal.\*

In these various maladies, leprosy inevitably played the principal role, before and after the appearance of the *mal de Naples*. Those practitioners who have studied the leprosy and who have published their researches on this subject, are agreed on the opinion that the leprosy was communicated by sexual relations

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\*Cf. our popular saying with regard to other sources of venereal contagion: "Poor place to take a woman."

rather than in any other way. These relations between healthy persons and lepers were very rare; but imprudence or dissolute habits sometimes led to them, with great harm to the healthy person, who in turn became a leper. Bernard Gordon, whom we have cited above, tells us that a certain countess who had the leprosy, came to Montpellier, and that he treated her to the end of her malady. A bachelor in medicine whom he sent to her to treat her, was unfortunate enough to share her bed. She became pregnant and he a leper. (*Lilium Medicinæ*, Part I, Chapter XXII.) A quantity of analogous facts might be found in the writings of Forestus of Paulmier, of Paré, of Fernel, etc., who wrote upon the elephantiasis or the leprosy, expressing the unanimous sentiment of the schools of medicine and surgery. Jean Manardi of Ferrera also sums up this question at the beginning of the sixteenth century, without perceiving that he is confusing the leprosy and the venereal maladies: "Those," he says, in his *Epistolæ Medicinales*, published in 1525, "those who have commerce with a woman who has had an affair a little while before with a leper, so that the semen still remains in her matrix, contracts the leprosy, and sometimes other maladies, of greater or less magnitude, according to their own disposition as well as that of the leper who has infected the woman." In all these citations, we shall reproduce the translation which Louis, the translator and annotator of Astruc, employed in the interest of his system in order not to alter the medical meaning of the learned author of the treatise, *De Morbis Venereis*; but these citations themselves sometimes appear to us to be contrary to this system. In examining this passage of Jean Minardi, for example, it is impossible not to recognize the venereal maladies in those "other maladies of greater or less magnitude" engendered by a commerce more or less imprudent with a person more or less leprous. For the rest, a commerce of this nature, which would have carried with it the pain of death for the leper in certain cases, would undoubtedly have been looked upon as impossible by the legislature, which made no provision for it in the criminal code.

The law of custom regulated everything which concerned the institution of lazaret houses, in which the leper was put *en charte privée*, so to speak. According to the Customary of Boulnois, when it was discovered after the death of a man that he was a leper, and that he had nevertheless lived in the company of healthy folk, these latter were to be looked upon as his accomplices; and all the beasts of cloven hoof belonging to the inhabitants of the place where this leper had died, were confiscated for the profit of the seigneur. Each parish found itself in this manner responsible for its lepers; it was bound to provide for them, after having clad them in a species of livery and confined them in *bordes*, furnished with a bed, a table and a few other utensils of wood and earth. (*Traité de la Police* by Delaunay, Volume I, page 636 and following.) The lepers, who looked upon their disease as a living tomb, constantly endeavored to make their way back into the bosom of society, but the latter incessantly repelled them with horror. Each time that a laxness on the part of the police allowed these poor wretches to dissimulate their sorrowful condition, and participate in the common life, there was to be seen in the cities a revival of leprosy, which forced the magistrates to put the ancient ordinances back in force. In 1371, the provost of Paris caused to be published letters patent which had been addressed to him by Charles V, enjoining all the lepers to quit the capital within a period of fifteen days, "under very gross corporal and pecuniary pains." In 1388, he forbade lepers to enter Paris any more without an express permission bearing his signature. In 1394 and 1402, the same prohibitions were addressed to the lepers, "under pain of being taken to the executioner and his valets and detained as prisoners during the month, on bread and water, and following to be banished from the realm." These prohibitions were always evaded at this period, and the healthy population forgot its terrors regarding lepers, and the latter continued to live among them as though they were not affected by a contagious disease, for the leprosy diminished day by day, or at least its external



signs became less manifest. The Parliament of Paris rendered a decree under date of the 11th of July, 1453, against a leper who had married a healthy woman. This woman, whom the leprosy had not yet attacked, as it appeared, was separated from her husband, and she was accordingly forbidden to *converse* with him, under pain of being placed in the pillory and afterwards banished. She was still permitted to dwell in the interior of the city, but she was ordered to cease selling fruits there, for the fear she might communicate to someone the contagion of the leprosy.

This decree is very significant; it proves that the rules concerning leprosy were poorly observed in the fifteenth century, and that the lepers were permitted to reside outside the lazar houses. The consequences of this relaxation must have been a return of the leprosy and of the maladies which resulted from it. As a matter of fact, a few years before the venereal malady had been observed in Italy and in France, the lepers had begun to multiply anew and to spread the venom of elephantiasis, and public health had suffered a profound taint through Prostitution, which was the hideous resort of the lepers, male and female. By ordinance of the provost of Paris, dated the 15th of April, 1488, it was enjoined "on all persons attacked with the abominable malady of the leprosy, very perilous and contagious, to leave Paris before the feast of Easter day and to retire at once to their lazar houses following the publication of the said ordinance, under pain of imprisonment for one month, on bread and water; under pain also of losing their horses, saddlecloths, their *cliquettes* and runelets, and an arbitrary corporal punishment; they are permitted nevertheless to send on errands for them their servants and servant maids who are in health." These lepers, who had horses and saddlebags, servants and servant maids in good health, must have tended to spread the leprosy frightfully among the healthy ones of the population with whom they associated; and this form of leprosy, transmitted from one to another through venereal pleasures, corrupted physically those whom vice had corrupted with a moral stain. This was not yet the leprosy

properly so-called. This was the leprosy of incontinence and the bad houses; it was a horrible malady which Prostitution had carried in its flanks, and which it unceasingly warmed in its bosom; this was the *grosse vérole*, which the French, from the place of its birth, named the *mal de Naples*, and which the Italians, on the contrary, called the *mal Francais*.

Addenda: In the work of translating against time, as it were, I find that I have overlooked making translations of the verses appearing on pages 536 (\*), 540 (†), and 541 (‡); this lack has been supplied by Nicolson, whose versions follow:

\*Whoso would find the cause of this must seek it—by Saint Giles!—  
 In every fawning damosel whose trade is vending wiles  
 And who for gain of gold, of gold, her body's bloom defiles—  
 Drive her beyond the town to live with lazars and exiles!  
 Oh, many will be the manners while many shall be the dames,  
 Let them be driven beyond the town who flaunt their harlots' names,  
 For gold is god to the women, gold is the end of their aims.  
 Let them be herded in bordels now and hidden with all their shames!

†One lets the dress divide  
 To show her breasts and show  
 The wanton flesh below;  
 Another opens wide  
 The seam to bare her side;  
 And one her leg discovers.  
 This gets nor lays nor lovers.

‡Your c. . . . has the cough, godmother,  
 Your c. . . . has the cough, the cough!



## CHAPTER XX.

IT WOULD appear to us to have been definitely proved, by the simple comparison of certain dates, that the venereal malady had not awaited the discovery of America to make its appearance in Europe and to make there terrible progress. This malady, as we have sought to prove by certain facts and deductions, existed from remote antiquity, but it was successively combined with other maladies, and especially with the leprosy, which had given it an entirely new appearance. It was Prostitution, which, in all times and in all countries, served as an energetic auxiliary to this scourge, which the governmental police endeavored to surround, so to speak, with a cordon of sanitation. When this sanitary cordon was suddenly broken down and abandoned, the malady resumed its course and found new power in the bosom of legal Prostitution. That is how the venereal leprosy came to break out at the same time, with a degree of force, in France, in Italy, in Spain, in Germany, and in England, at the very moment when Christopher Columbus was returning from his first voyage. It is not difficult to establish the fact that the *grosse vérole*, or at least an analogous malady, had been observed in Europe from the year 1483; that this malady, or some other of the same nature and the same origin, formerly existed in the Antilles; and did not there produce the same symptoms as in the temperate latitudes; that the expedition of Charles VIII in Italy may have aided in spreading this frightful malady, but that Italy and France, each of whom assigned to the other a priority in this matter, had nothing to quarrel about, they having merely reciprocally exchanged what they each had had for a long period; finally that, since its known appearance, the malady had frequently changed symptoms, characteristics and names.

Among these names, which were many and each of which had a local origin, we must distinguish the popular from the scien-



tific. These latter were naturally Latin, in all the books and in the *recipes* (prescriptions) of medicine, but they disappeared one after another, yielding place to the one which Fracastor had invented for the needs of his poetic fable, in which the shepherd Syphile is the first to be tainted with this villainous malady, for the reason that he has offended the gods. The majority of the Italian or German physicians who wrote at the end of the fifteenth century on the subject of the new malady (*morbis novus*), to which the Italian wars had given prominence, Joseph Grundbeck, Coradino Gilini, Nicolo Leonicens, Antonio Benivenio, Wendelin Hock de Brackenaw, Iacopo Cataneo, etc., made use of the usual term of *morbis gallicus* (*mal Francais*). And yet, as though little satisfied with the admission into medical language of what was at once an error and a calumny, a number of them coined names more worthy of science and not quite so far from the historic truth. Joseph Grundbeck, the most ancient of all, added to the nickname of *mala de Frantzoz* the periphrasis of *gorre pestilentielle* (*pestilentialis scorra*) and the description of *mentulagra* (malady of the virile member); Torella, who as an Italian, prided himself on being able to Latinize better than a German, adopted *pudendagra* (malady of the shameful parts); Wendelin Hock preferred *mentagra*, for the reason that he believed he recognized in this supposed French malady the mentagra or leprosy of the chin, described by Pliny (*Hist. Nat.*, Book XXVI, Chapter 1); Jean Antoine Roverel and Jean Almenar made use of the word *patursa*, without knowing the true significance of this word, which permits us to suppose that it was the generic name of the malady in America.

Each nation defended itself against the charge of having engendered this malady by attributing to it the name of the neighboring nation to which public opinion was most hostile; thus, the Italians, the Germans and the English, who accused France of having been the cradle of the *grosse vérole*, called it *mal Francais*, *mal Francese*, *Frantzosen*, or *Frantzosischen pocken*, *French pox*; the French took refuge a little later by calling it the *mal*

*Napolitain*; the Flemish and the Dutch, the Africans and the Moors, the Portuguese and the inhabitants of Navarre cursed it as the *mal Espagnol* or *Castillan*; but this odious gift of which each people declined to consider itself the donor, was called by the Orientals the "malady of Christians" (*mal des chrétiens*); the Asiatics called it the *mal des Portugais*; the Persians called it the *mal de Turcs*; the Polish called it the *mal des Allemands*, and the Muscovites the *mal des Polonais* (see the *Treatise* of Astruc, *De Morbis Venereis*, Book I, Chapter I). The various symptoms of the malady also gave rise to different names, which had to do especially with the pustulous or cancerous condition of the skin of the victim; thus, the Spaniards called this disease *las bubas* or *buvas* or *boas*; the Genoans called it *lo malo de la tavele*; the Tuscans called it *il malo delle bolle*; the Lombards called it *lo malo de le brosure* on account of the ulcerous and multicolored pustules which formed on all parts of the body in individuals tainted with this species of plague; the French called it the *grosse vérole* to distinguish it from the *petite vérole*, which had been classified from time immemorial among the epidemic maladies, and which, less redoubtable than its younger sister, still resembled the latter in the *variety* of the pustules and ulcerations which formed on the face; from the latter source came its generic name of *vérole* or *variole*, formed from the Latin *varius* and from the old French *vair*, which signified white and gray fur, and which was also applied to one of those heraldic metals, composed of equal sized pieces symmetrically arranged in the form of bells. It was supposed that this arrangement of these pieces of the *vair* possessed some analogy in appearance with the motley and creviced skin of an unfortunate *variole*. Finally, all the saints who were looked upon as being able to cure the leprosy were called into requisition; they were also invoked against the venereal maladies, and no scruple was felt in applying their respective names to these disreputable diseases, which were in a manner placed under their auspices. There was, then, between the leprosy and the *grosse vérole*, an avowed fraternity, which

manifested itself in the names of saints applied without distinction to the two maladies, which were called the *mal de Saint Mein*, *mal de Saint Job*, *mal de Saint Sement*, *mal de Saint Roch*, *mal de Saint Evagre*, and even *mal de Sainte-Reine*, etc. It was sufficient for a saint to be reputed as having some influence over the cure of wounds and malign ulcers for the *véroles* to address their prayers to him and to call themselves his privileged patients.

The physicians and historians who were the first to speak of the venereal epidemic in the last of the fifteenth century, are practically in agreement upon this point, that the malady did not break out strikingly until after the expedition of Naples; but they almost all assign this expedition to the year 1494, whereas it did not take place until 1495. This contradiction in dates, however, does not constitute an historic error; for before the time of Charles IX, the year began at Easter, according to the French calendar. Writers who have made a comparison of the date of Charles VIII's invasion of Italy and that of the appearance of the *grosse vérole* in Europe have not hesitated to assign these two heterogeneous facts to the same year, 1494. According to them, the venereal malady had been observed from the beginning of that year; but the King of France did not make his entry into Naples, where he found this horrible malady gloriously installed before him, until the 22d of February, 1495, which fell in 1494, since Easter day did not mark the beginning of the new year until the 19th of April. It is necessary, then, in order to justify the date of 1494, recorded by physicians and historians who specify the moment when the plague broke out, it is necessary to assume that this *mal Francais* was born at Naples between the 22d of February and the 19th of April, 1495. It would be difficult to raise the objection that the authorities who assigned the appearance of the malady to 1494, have made an error of one year; such an error is not probable in the matter of a fact that was so recent and so remarkable. Let us add also that the first to establish this date of 1494, were Italians and that the year in Italy commenced on the first of January and not at Easter, as in France. The result

of these contradictions has been that the Italians have accused the adventurous expedition of the French of being the cause of a scourge, which it may have developed and aggravated, but which it did not bring with it. "The physicians of our time," wrote, in 1497, Nicolo Leonicensi, in his Treatise, *De Morbo Gallico*, "have not yet given a true name to this malady, but they call it commonly the *French plague*, either because they assume that this contagion was brought into Italy by the French, or that Italy had been attacked at the same time by the French army and by this malady." Torrella, in his treatise *De Dolore in Pudenda*, is still more explicit: "This malady," he says, "was discovered when the French army entered Italy, and especially after the French had taken possession of the realm of Naples and after they had sojourned there a while. It is for this reason that the Italians have given it the name of the *French plague*, imagining it to be native with the French." Cataneo, in his book, *De Morbo Gallico*, which appeared in 1505, limits himself to recalling the same fact: "The year 1494 of the Nativity of Our Lord, in the time when Charles VIII, King of France, was taking possession of the realm of Naples, and under the pontificate of Alexander VI, one saw born in Italy a frightful malady which had never before appeared in the course of the preceding centuries, and which was unknown in the entire world." Jean de Vigo also makes the sudden irruption of this malady in Italy coincident with the passage of Charles VIII, a malady which he says no one had ever seen, or at least ever observed before.

The national antipathy existing between the Italians and their conquerors did not fail to strengthen and propagate this erroneous opinion, which remained embedded in the beliefs of the people, and which engendered in the latter unjust resentments. The French were less concerned with complaining of the vanquished and with spreading the truth, which would have justified themselves, by showing that they themselves were the victims of the *mal de Naples*; for the first French authors who have spoken of this malady, say nothing of its origin, and say nothing of the



delights of the city of Naples, which had been conquered by Charles VIII.

There were, however, in Italy and in Germany, a number of artists and a number of more impartial historians, who did not hesitate to proclaim the innocence of the French in this affair, thus approaching a truth which science and history should not envelop in a cloud. Some questioned the date of 1494, attributed to the birth of the venereal plague (*lues venerea*); others assigned a more ancient date to its origin, or at least to its first ravages; others, less well instructed or feigning, perhaps, a calculated ignorance on this subject, assigned to the year 1496 the first invasion of the malady, which they would have to have come from Spain, and, consequently, from America. "In the year of our salvation 1496," wrote Antonio Benivenio in 1507, "a new malady crept not merely into Italy, but also throughout almost the whole of Europe. This malady, which came from Spain, was soon widely spread, first in Italy, then in France and in the other countries of Europe, attacking an infinity of persons." And so we see that the poor Charles VIII is quite innocent of an unjust accusation which put him under the ban of a plague-ridden Europe. The historians come forward here to lend their support. Antonius Coccius Sabellicus, who knew what the *grosse vérole* was, since he himself had contracted it (see the *Élogia* of Paul Jove), states convincingly, in his historical collection published in Venice in 1502, "At the same time (1496), a new sort of malady began to spread throughout all Italy, about the time of the first descent which the French had made the preceding year (1495), and it is probably for this reason that it is called the French plague, for, as I see it, one cannot be sure as to whence it was this cruel malady first came, a malady which no century had experienced up to then." If the date of 1496 could have been established and proved, the appearance of the malady would, quite naturally, have been connected with the discovery of America. In any case, the date of 1496 has an evident connection with the rapid and formidable spread of the venereal epidemic.

But for scholars, who did not blindly follow popular tradition, there was no doubt that the French plague and the plague of Naples had preceded the triumphant expedition of Charles VIII. "The French," judiciously remarks Francesco Guicciardini, in the *History* of his times, "having been attacked by this malady during their sojourn at Naples, and then returning home, spread it throughout Italy; now this malady, absolutely new or unknown up to our day in our continent, excepting perhaps in the most remote regions, has spread so horribly during the last few years that it would seem to have been handed down to posterity as one of the most funereal of calamities." Guicciardini was in the right, in attributing solely to the army of the King of France the propagation of this plague throughout Italy. It is clear that this hideous plague had taken root at Naples before the arrival of the French. Ulrich de Hutten, a learned German writer, who had himself had a sorrowful experience with venereal contagion, assigned its beginning to the year 1493, a date which he could not have justified except by hearsay, since it was at Mayence in 1519 that he published his book entitled *De Morbi Gallaci Curatione*: "In the year 1493, or thereabouts, of the birth of Jesus Christ, a very pernicious evil commenced to be felt, not only in France, but, first of all, at Naples. The name of this malady was derived from the fact that it first made its appearance in the army of the French who were making war in that country under the command of their King Charles." Then he adds this interesting detail, which explains for us the lack of agreement as to the precise date of the invasion of the malady: "The people have not spoken of it for two entire years, counting the time from which it commenced." Ulrich de Hutten shared the opinion of the German practitioners who looked upon the malady as precedent to the conquest of Naples by the French; thus Wendelin Hock de Brackenaw, who had completed his medical studies at the University of Bologna, repeats what he had heard in Italy at the time of the first appearance of the *mal de Naples*. "From the year 1494, up to the present year, 1502," he says, "a certain contagious

malady, which is called the French plague, has made sufficient ravages.” But elsewhere, in the same work, he states what was common knowledge with all his German confrères: “This plague which commenced, rightly speaking, in the year 1483 of Our Lord announced,” he says, “by reason of the conjunction of a number of planets in the month of October of that year, the corruption of the blood and of the bile and the confusion of all the humors, as well as an abundance of the melancholy humor in all men, as in women.” The most clever German physicians, Laurent Phrysius, Jean Benoist, etc., ranged themselves on his side, preferring to see the cause of the malady in planetary revolutions and in the atmospheric disorders of the year 1483.

This was not the only cause, nor the most unlikely one, which historians put forward; they in general merely echoed the vulgar who always, especially in Italy, have a story ready to provide a miraculous origin for all that is not readily understood. The French plague, more than any other thing, worked upon the imagination of the Neapolitans and lent itself to the most bizarre inventions, among which, however, it would not be impossible to discover a basis of fact, enveloped in ridiculous fables. Gabriel Fallopius, who wrote a long time after the events which he reports (1560), sustains the thesis that in the course of the first war of Naples, a Spanish garrison which was resisting the passage of the French troops, one night abandoned their retrenchments, after having poisoned the wells and having advised the Italian bakers to mingle plaster and chalk in the flour from which they made bread for the French army. This plaster and poisoned water might have produced the venereal infection, according to the narrative of Gabriel Fallopius. Andrea Coesalpini of Arezzo, who was the physician of Pope Clement VIII, assumes that the poisoning of the French was accomplished by other means, and he assures us that eye-witnesses had reported the fact to him: “After the taking of Naples, the French besieged the little city of Somma, which had a garrison of Spaniards. These latter left the place during the night, leaving to the disposition of the besiegers a

number of tons of excellent wine of Vesuvius, with which had been mingled blood provided by the lepers of the hospital of Saint-Lazare. The French entered this city without striking a blow, and became drunken with the poisoned wine; they at once fell sick, and the symptoms of their malady resembled those of the leprosy." We may already glimpse the truth under the veils which here cover it in a manner so transparent. There later arose other traditions which exaggerated and improved upon one another, tending always to spread the most unreasonable opinion. Fioravanti, in his *Capricci Medicinali*, which he published in 1564, relates a singular story which he said he had heard from a certain Pasquale Gibilotto of Naples, who was still alive at the period he wrote, and able to vouch for the facts. During this expedition to Naples, which everywhere appears as the accomplice of the malady to which it gave birth, the Neapolitan vivandiers who provisioned the two armies ran short of beef and so conceived the infernal idea of employing the flesh of the dead in place of beef or mutton; those who ate this human flesh, poisoned by death and corruption, were soon attacked by a malady which was none other than the syphilis. Fioravanti does not tell us what was the scene of these frightful anthropophagic orgies; but since he locates his tale among the Spaniards and the French, we must believe that this isolated occurrence took place during the siege of the little city of Callibra, occupied by a Spanish garrison. It is a known fact that all corrupt flesh is capable of producing the effects of poisoning, but there is no possibility of believing with Fioravanti that animals that feed on the flesh of animals of the same species, are thereby likely to contract a malady similar to the plague of Naples. There was a depraved belief in the Middle Ages that the use of human flesh provoked acute, epidemic and pestilential maladies. The illustrious philosopher, Francis Bacon, wholly the physician as he was, did not hesitate to repeat, in his *Natural History*, the horrible tale of Fioravanti: "The French," he says, "from whom the plague of Naples has received its name, report that there were at the siege of Naples,



certain knavish merchants who, in place of tunny fish, sold the flesh of men who had been recently slain in Mauritania, and to such a horrible aliment was the origin of the malady attributed. The thing would appear to be likely enough," adds the author of so many illuminating treatises on the sciences, "for the cannibals of the occidental parts who live on human flesh, are strongly subject to the *vérole*."

To find in anthropagy the origin of the plague of Naples did not provide horrors enough in attempting to ascertain the causes of this hideous disease, which was commonly looked upon as a monstrous fruit of mortal sin. Two learned physicians of the sixteenth century, who had not, however, observed more than the secondary effects of this terrible contagion, proceeded to hurl, so to speak, the last stone by endeavoring to demonstrate, with more reason than success, that the origin of the venereal plague must be attributed to sodomy and to bestiality: "A holy layman," says Jean-Baptiste van Holmont in his *Tumulus Pestis*, "in seeking to divine why the *vérole* had appeared the century past and not before, was ravished in spirit and had a vision of a mare eaten with the farcin, from which he suspected that, at the siege of Naples, where this malady appeared for the first time, some man had had abominable relations with a beast of this sort, which had been attacked with the same plague, and that afterward, as a result of divine justice, he had unhappily infected the human species."

Later, in 1706, an English physician, John Linder, did not hesitate, in seeking for the secret causes of the American syphilis, to advance the opinion that "this malady came from sodomy practiced between men and large apes, which are the satyrs of the ancients." It is important to recognize the fact that, in all these tales and observations of physicians who were the first to study the plague of Naples, whether in Italy, France, or Germany, no mention is made of the malady which Christopher Columbus had brought back from the Antilles, and which, in any case, had nothing to do with an analogous malady born and ac-

climated in Europe before the discovery of America had borne its bitter fruits. Christopher Columbus, coming back from the Spanish Isles, where he had dwelt barely a month, disembarked at the port of Palos in Portugal, on the 13th of January, 1493, with ninety sailors or soldiers and nine Indians whom he had brought back with him. The health of his crew may have been in a bad state, but historians do not speak of it, and we only know that he repaired to Barcelona with a few of his ships' companions in order to give an account of his voyage to Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella of Aragon: "The city of Barcelona," says Roderigo Diaz, in his treatise, *Contra las Bubas*, "was soon infected with the *vérole*, which there made astonishing progress." On the 25th of September of the same year, Christopher Columbus departed with fifteen vessels laden with 1500 soldiers and a great number of sailors and artisans. Fourteen of these vessels came back to Spain the following year, during which Bartholomew Columbus, brother of Christopher, departed with three vessels which came back to Spain towards the end of the year 1494, bringing Pedro Margarito, a Catalonian gentleman, gravely afflicted with the syphilis. It is probable that he was not the only one who was ill with the same malady; but the log of the ship cites no other. The year 1495 saw the maritime relations between the Antilles and Spain multiply; when Christopher Columbus, accused of imaginary crimes, returned from the old world in chains, the ship on which he was a prisoner brought 200 soldiers suffering from the American *vérole*. These 200 plague victims disembarked at Cadiz on the 10th of June, 1496. Nine months after, the Parliament of Paris had already published an ordinance relating to victims of the *grosse vérole*.

One might, without an excess of paradox, sustain the thesis that it was Europe which gave America a malady to which the Antilles was better suited than that of Naples; one might put forward good reasons enough to prove that the Spanish adventurers who had taken service in the army of the King of Naples had returned to their country with the venereal contagion, and without

being cured, had there embarked to the Antilles. It is well known what a terrible influence a change of air and habits had always had on this inexplicable malady, which heat tends to soothe and which cold revives with an excess of fury. Finally, it is probable, if not proved, that the venereal evil as it broke out in Europe about 1494, was but an infamous product of leprosy and debauchery. Physicians were all very slow in recognizing that this malady was not perhaps so new as they had at first believed; and they judged that the leprosy, and especially elephantiasis, possessed more than one point of similarity with this virulent affection, surrounded with unaccustomed symptoms, the principle of which, however, did not vary. The popular voice spoke loud enough for medicine to hear it. One is astonished that the boldest pioneers of the science should have limited themselves to repeating the rumors which were repeated regarding the origin of syphilis, without erecting a system which it would have been easy to support with proofs and with experiences. But in the first times of this epidemic, which was looked upon as a plague sent from Heaven, and one odious to nature (these are the terms of which Joseph Grundbeck makes use in the most ancient treatise which we possess on this subject), the physicians and surgeons stood aloof and declined to treat the patients who came for aid. "Savants," says Torrella, "avoided treating this malady, being persuaded that they themselves understood nothing of it. This is why the vendors of drugs, the herb-vendors, the vagabonds and charlatans still pass themselves off today as the only ones who can effect a true and perfect cure."\* Ulrich de Hutten expresses himself with still more vivacity, in avowing that the malady was abandoned to itself and to its own mysterious forces before medicine and surgery had acquired the courage to deal with it: "The physicians," he says, "frightened by this malady, not only are careful not to approach those who are attacked by it, but they flee the very sight of them, as

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\*The "venereal specialist" and the "diseases of men" we have with us always.

they would the most desperate malady. Finally, in this consternation of the physicians, the surgeons hesitate to turn their hand to a treatment so difficult." These circumstances sufficiently explain why it is that the first periods of the venereal leprosy have remained shrouded in so much obscurity and why the plague was so poorly observed in all countries where it first made its appearance.

We hold, however, the key to the enigma, and we have but to consult the traditions of the Courts of Miracles and of the houses of debauchery, in order to learn in what fashion it was, under the influence of Prostitution, that the monster, the Proteus of syphilis, was engendered and multiplied tenfold. There is undoubtedly an element of scientific truth in those anecdotes which the great physicians did not disdain to collect from those in the streets. Manardi of Ferrera, in a letter addressed about 1525 to Santanna, a surgeon who devoted his attention to the treating of venereal patients, tells to the latter that the most ancient and best established opinion assigns the beginning of the plague to the epoch when Charles VIII was preparing for the war on Italy (about 1493): "This malady," he says, "first broke out at Valencia in Spain, through the deed of a famous courtesan, who, for the price of fifty crowns gold, accorded her favors to a leprous knight; this woman, having been infected, infected in her turn, all the youth who came to see her, of whom more than four hundred were shortly afflicted with the same disease. Some of them having followed King Charles into Italy, bore with them there this terrible malady." Manardi limits himself to reporting the fact, like the learned naturalist-physician Pierre-André Mathiote, who merely changes the characters and the scene: "Some," he says, "have written that the French had contracted this malady by impure relations with a leprous woman when they were traversing a mountain of Italy (see his treatise *De Morbo Gallico*)."

The identity of the syphilis with the leprosy was clearly indicated in the simple reminiscences of popular good sense; but learned men accepted these explanations, clos-



ing their eyes to facts which should have put them on the right path. Another physician of Ferrera, Antonio Mussa Brassavola, admits the probable pré-existence of the venereal maladies and of the communicating virus, when he relates the following fact in his book on the *French Plague*: "In the camp of the French before Naples, there was a very famous and very beautiful courtesan, who had a sordid ulcer at the orifice of her matrix. The men who had relations with her, contracted a malign affection, which ulcerated their virile members. A number of men were soon affected, and a number of women, having cohabited with these men, also contracted this disease, which they in turn gave to other men." Thus, according to Brassavola, the plague of Naples was but an accidental complication of the venereal evil which had existed in an isolated state in certain individuals before becoming epidemic and manifesting a prodigious activity.

Finally, one of the greatest torchbearers of the medical art, Theophrastus Paracelsus, proclaimed a whole new doctrine on the subject of the venereal maladies, when he announced their affinity with the leprosy, in his *Grande Chirurgie* (Book I, Chapter 7): "The *vérole*, he says, with that conviction which genius alone can give, "had its origin in the impure relations of a leprous Frenchman with a courtesan who had venereal buboes, and who afterwards infected all those who had relations with her. It is thus," continues this clever and daring observer, "it is thus that the *vérole* comes from the leprosy and the venereal buboes, almost as the race of mules comes from the copulation of a horse and a she ass, and by contagion it is spread throughout the universe." There was, in this passage of the *Grande Chirurgie*, more logic and more science than in all the writings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, concerning the venereal maladies, the true origin of which no physician had divined. Paracelsus, then, looked upon the *vérole* of 1494 as a new species in the ancient family of venereal maladies.

## End of Volume II

This is the End of Volume IV of the Original Text.









